MY BALKAN TOUR

BY ROY TREVOR

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"I live not in myself but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture; I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a human chain,
Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain."

BYRON.

MY BALKAN TOUR

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

EN ROUTE

MY BALKAN TOUR

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME JOURNEYINGS AND ADVENTURES IN THE NEAR EAST TOGETHER WITH A DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA, DALMATIA, CROATIA & THE KINGDOM OF MONTENEGRO

BY ROY TREVOR

WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE A MAP AND 104 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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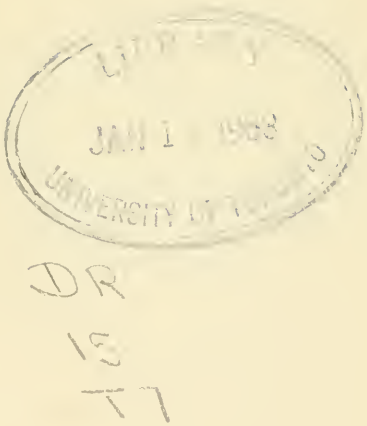

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TO MY MOTHER

A LOYAL CHAMPION OF THE OPPRESSED
WHOSE INTEREST IN THE FORTUNES OF THE
LESSER BALKAN STATES HAS NEVER FLAGGED
HERSELF AN INDEFATIGABLE TRAVELLER
AND A TRUE LOVER OF NATURE
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

PREFACE

IN the following pages I have given a description of our personal impressions during a tour in the Near East.

Although the means of transit was an automobile, I do not wish the book to be regarded from a motorist's standpoint. Save for the actual road experience, which I hope may interest the reader, the work will be found to deal with the description, history and general impressions of the towns and countries passed through.

My wife and I first made the tour a year ago, and were so charmed at what we saw that we determined, for several reasons, to make another journey the year following. Upon our first journey, while at Cetinje, we were caught by the unexpected Declaration of Annexation by Austria of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. This was rather serious, for the country districts flew at once to arms, and we were compelled to make the 500 miles that lay between ourselves and civilisation in just four days. Naturally our tour was considerably curtailed. We had not visited Montenegro *en auto*, being unable to get our car shipped across the Bocche di Cattaro. The land east of Sarájevo was still *terra incognita* as far as an automobile was concerned; but upon the second tour we made a determined attempt and did actually reach the Serbish and Turkish frontiers. Armed with previous knowledge, we were able to make an exhaustive tour of the countries, and were fortunate enough to cover some new ground. Upon the first journey everything was so

strange and novel that our impressions were hurried, breathless and blurred, our minds being filled to overflowing with innumerable wondrous memories, impossible to separate, yet combining to fill us with a great longing to return and reconstruct them. That is the reason why I have written only of the second tour.

At the end of the book a chapter will be found dealing with distances, hotels and roads ; also a few general hints upon the several ways of reaching these lands and the travelling therein.

I have to make the following grateful acknowledgments :—

Firstly, to H.M. King Nikolas, for his great kindness in permitting us passage through his land, and for the special facilities so graciously accorded to us.

Secondly, to our friend Count Caboga, of Ragusa, to whose influence we owe the military pontoon upon which Mercédès crossed the Bocche. I take this opportunity to express our thanks for his very generous assistance.

Thirdly, to His Excellency Mr. Ramadamavitch, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères* at Cetinje, and to the Montenegran Government for the special " permit " with which we were furnished, and for the many acts of kindness and foresight that made our tour in the kingdom such a complete success.

Fourthly, to Professor Bulic, Conservator of Ancient Monuments of Dalmatia, for his kind explanations of the great work to which he has devoted his life.

Fifthly, and lastly, to the Austrians, Croatians, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Montenegrans, Dalmatians, Ragusians, Albanians, Serbians, Moslems, Orthodox and Catholic, Jews, gipsies, and the thousand and one strange folk who dwell within these forgotten lands. Once again we thank them for their magnificent reception. Never for an instant did they doubt our good intentions ; what

was theirs to give they freely offered, and their memory will live for all time in the warmest corner of our hearts.

Until a few years ago these countries were practically unknown to the ordinary tourist. Comparatively few visitors found their way into the interior, and remarkably few publications appeared. I mean, of course, for the ordinary traveller, not historically or architecturally, for the lands have had their talented and devoted chroniclers from time immemorial. Of late years several light books have been published, and the trouble raised by Austria in 1908 served to draw these countries very prominently before the eyes of the world.

I have endeavoured to depict the unique picture of Eastern life that they present. It has been stated that no province throughout the Sultan's domains can show more ancient customs and traditions in force to-day than can Bosnia even under Austrian administration. Alas! year by year these old customs are dying out. I have watched Austria's policy upon the spot, and each succeeding year formulates some fresh move or other that ousts the Moslem from his own—even Sarájevo, whose market is the centre of Moslem life, and where not a European reminder marred the picture, has not escaped. Visitors used to revel in the scene ; look where you would everything was Eastern in its utmost purity. Down one side ran a row of the most curious and strangest shops possible to imagine. They were in reality small packing-cases, four together making a square, each a perfect workshop in itself, with just enough room for a dusky follower of Allah to squat cross-legged. I was grieved beyond measure, upon a last visit, to find that Austria had pulled down many of these wooden stalls, and that in their place workmen were busily engaged in erecting an ugly building of hideously modern design. It was the first time that a Christian builder had dared to invade the *Tsharshija*—the pride of Bosna Serai—the Damascus

of the north. Austria should rather have treasured this Oriental jewel, keeping it from contamination and unique in itself, if only for the sake of the endless attraction it offered to visitors. Little do we in England realise the secret policy that Austria treasures deep in her mind. Every month sees fresh settlers planted in different parts of the land; large colonies of Tirolean, Styrian and Bohemian peasantry are continually being founded, lumbering, mining and farming are all carried on by German-speaking folk; and who knows but that these lands may prove for over-populated Germany a heaven-sent receptacle for her crowded millions? Think what it would mean to Europe were the great Northern Empire to extend unbroken from the North Sea to the Adriatic. It is only a dream, you will say; and perhaps you are right; nevertheless, it is a great dream and one with more than a tinge of probability.

As it is only within recent years that these countries have come before the eyes of "Idle Europe," they naturally open a fresh hunting-ground to the tourist. When once it is realised how accessible are they, what facilities they offer for travel, and how great are the rewards, tourists will flock thither in thousands, until the Eastern scenes are Eastern no longer, and one must push further towards the Rising Sun into the mountains of Albania and Macedonia.

But it is safe to say that for the next ten years at least travellers will find Eastern life still pure to the core, charming in its very freshness, the people split up into many different races, each with its own customs, dress, tongue and religion; living their own lives and working out their preordained destiny. Taken in conjunction they form perhaps the strangest, weirdest composition ever herded together.

In case some of the incidents connected with the behaviour of animals that I have described should be

thought rather far-fetched and exaggerated, I should like to say that they are, one and all, absolutely true. If anything, I have kept within the actual facts, for upon one or two occasions things did happen that, had we not witnessed them ourselves, we could scarcely have credited. It is safe to say that few road travellers have experienced more anxious moments with half-terrified horses, mules and donkeys than we have, and I can only ask my readers to give credit to every incident as described. Indeed, very few bad incidents have been chronicled, and I have at hand enough matter to fill a whole volume had I the desire to write a book upon the subject.

In conclusion I would say that if the ordinary tourist or bored *habitué* of Europe will but journey thither by boat, train or automobile, he will find it indeed a Land of Promise, a promise of joys unspeakable, of beauty, of intense historical interest, possessing a picturesqueness unequalled anywhere in the world.

Should you desire to take this advice you will be repaid a hundred, nay, a thousand fold; you will encounter Moslems, Christians, Jews and Orthodox, you will gain a wonderful insight into their lives; you will meet a race of giant warriors who are men indeed; your eyes will be charmed by the blaze of colour, your ears will hum with the Babel of strange, almost mythical tongues: in a few days you will find yourself back in the Middle Ages; you will witness a state of things as they were almost at the dawn of history. If you are an artist and a lover of the beautiful you will revel in the Dalmatian Riviera, or find endless delight in the quaint life of the East. Do you love architecture, you will discover wonderful old buildings and exquisite monuments. Should you have a taste for archæology, you will find examples of Grecian and Roman remains that tell strange tales of a bygone age; should you

delight in history and folk-lore, then you will drink your fill. But best of all, if you are only a simple traveller, with a deep, untutored love for the novel and enchanting, you will go back year after year with the certainty of discovering fresh glories in this wonderful, enchanting, unspoilt Land of Promise.

ROY TREVOR.

MONTE CARLO, *February 12th*, 1910.

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PROLOGUE

IT was after dinner and we were clustering around the glowing logs of the library fire; the weather had changed during the last few days, and though June had arrived the rain beat in gusts against the leaded windows. Somewhere in one of the many gables the wind had found a congenial crevice and howled mournfully. One could hear the noise of the waves upon the rocks far below, sounding like distant thunder, and almost feel the shock as each volume of water was hurled against the rugged cliff, filling every hollow and fighting savagely to be free. No lights were lit, and flickering flames only struggled with the darkness of the lofty room, chasing the shadows along the carved oak till one's fancy materialised goblins from out the blackness. Sheila, Dorothy and myself were ensconced in cosy chairs, while Ken, leaning against the oaken fireplace, regarded us in evident disapproval.

It is true we had been a merry enough party at dinner that evening, but beneath Sheila's silvery laugh, Dorothy's quick repartee and Ken's deep chuckle I could detect a something too vague to express in words, but just enough to my practised ear to denote that the brightness and laughter were a trifle forced. Incidentally I had myself, for some time, experienced a kind of restless feeling, an unaccountable dissatisfaction which I could not reason with, an inexplicable desire to be up and doing.

Ken, though he likes not to be reminded thereof, was

but two short years ago a confirmed anti-motorist. I had laid determined siege to his citadel, and, carrying it by storm, persuaded him to forsake his yacht, and with his wife Dorothy, my sister, and his sister, Sheila, then my fiancée, try the effects of a short continental tour *en auto*. How well this acted has been written elsewhere ; the short tour was soon followed by other and longer ones. Together we visited Italy, with her wondrous cities ; Spain, full of romance and old-world charm ; Switzerland and Tirol giving their best and brightest, climbing the enchanting passes leading in wondrous ways up from the sweet valleys to the snow-capped glaciers ; Germany, humming with busy life, yet possessing many beauties and great silent forests ; Denmark, one huge farm ; and even a short stretch of Scandinavia. Lastly, dear old France, with her smiling lands and cherished memories. Each country in turn held us enchanted, showing us her wonders as we had never known them before, giving us such insights into her people's lives that we were no longer strangers in a strange land, but could feel and sympathise in their joys and sorrows. As the year waned so we moved on, now in the north, again among the snow Alps, and, as winter came, south to the Riviera and Italy. Free as the fairies we had flitted, our hearts ever hungering for more.

Sheila and I had been married in the spring and with Mercédès had spent three months in Algeria and Tunisia, returning at the end of May via Sicily and traversing the long stocking of Italy to the Alps. After enjoying Tirol we drifted eastward into Croatia. Pushing on, we made a discovery that resulted in a tour that easily eclipsed anything we had ever done. I had many years ago, with my sister Dorothy, taken the boat from Trieste down the Dalmatian coast as far as Cattaro, but had always classed the provinces in the interior, Bosnia and the Herzegovina, with Turkish administration. We now

found to our amazement that they were actually motorable, and the next few months were spent in discovering their resources. Never had we enjoyed ourselves as we did there, and had we not been unfortunately caught at Ragusa by the unexpected announcement of Austria's annexation of the two provinces, we should have done even more than we did. After an exciting journey back to civilisation we returned home more than charmed with our experiences in the Near East. Ken and Dorothy were wintering on the Riviera, but private matters kept Sheila and myself in town. We were joined by Ken and Dorothy early in May, and spent an arduous six weeks in sacrifices to social claims. Late in June, a trifle wearied with life in general, we had come down to my place upon the Sussex coast. It was nearly a fortnight later that the afore-mentioned restless feeling commenced to assert itself.

But to return to the beginning. The excitement that had effervesced during dinner had by now utterly subsided, and each was busy with his or her own thoughts. A gust, fiercer and more sudden than the others, rackled the windows and shrieked among the gables ; slowly it subsided, and save for the patter of the rain and the distant boom of the waves, we sat in silence. We had had little summer to speak of in England, one day fine, the next wet and stormy ; and now, to complete a programme of the utmost variety, a cold wave had settled over the land, giving it the appearance of February and quite inconsistent with our ideas of June. Ken was the first to break the stillness by relighting his cigar. Throwing the burnt match into the fire he turned quickly towards us and was about to speak when Sheila, suddenly sitting up in her chair, interposed.

" I know exactly what Ken is going to say," she remarked. " I have it word for word—why, I can feel it in every bone of my body."

Dorothy and I here evinced an interest in the proceedings.

" Don't you feel it calling you ? " Sheila continued, her colour heightened, her eyes sparkling. " Haven't we all been horribly bored, and couldn't think why ? Ken has just discovered—I knew yesterday, when you spoke of our first Alpine tour "—and she turned to me. " It's the old life," Sheila went on, " the old days with Mercédès, the warmth and colour of the South, the constant change and the love of the novel that has caught us. What else would make Ken behave for the last week like a bear with a sore head, or you wander about as though you had lost something ? Why did Dorothy revoke at bridge last night ? And why, oh why do I feel an insatiable desire to possess the moon ? It's just the longing for the old life, and nothing else. Come now, isn't it ? " and she cast a triumphant glance around.

" The old life," I repeated, as one who has solved some complex question. " Yes, you are right ; that's just it. I *am* tired of having my meals served so regularly and so well, of never feeling ravenously hungry, of having no worries worth speaking of, and being provided with every necessity of life with such irritating exactness. I want those old days back when we depended solely upon ourselves. Do you remember how——"

But Dorothy had long since drowned my voice by echoing Sheila's words.

Our lethargy had by now completely vanished, and we looked eagerly at Ken to see if Sheila's diagnosis had been correct. His reply was worthy of himself. Turning to me, he said in his old voice :

" How long will it take you to put Mercédès on the road ? "

For I had been giving her a thorough overhaul, and at that moment she lay stripped in the garage, a mere skeleton of her former self.

"In five days," I replied mechanically.

"Sheila and I can be ready," Dorothy quickly added.

"Still, it *is* rather a big thing to leave like this at a few days' notice," I persisted, to make quite certain that Ken was in earnest.

"The few days depend only upon you—and Mercédès," he answered instantly. "If you can't get her ready, just say so, and——"

That naturally finished it. A few more logs upon the fire and we drew up closer, to go further into the new scheme. Already we seemed to feel the warm sunshine of the South, the blue arc of a cloudless sky and the colour of the East. Behind us the great room was dark, only our eager faces lit by the cheerful blaze; rain and wind beat and whistled dismally outside, but their very existence was forgotten.

It was now my turn to speak, and a project that had been forming vaguely deep down in my mind quickly took form. The present moment seemed a heaven-sent opportunity for putting it into words.

"I think we have done civilised Europe very thoroughly," I began. "Besides, Sheila and I know Algeria and Tunisia, while Ken and Dorothy have toured Corsica and Sardinia. Russia is out of the question. Even if the necessary permits did not take months to obtain, the scenery and roads are not inviting enough to induce one to stray far from the cities. Therefore there remains only one other centre. Why not let Sheila and I show you something more enchanting than you ever conceived —the Near East—that dreamland we discovered and only half explored last year. Bosnia and the Herzegovina, wrested from the Moslem; Dalmatia, with its thousand isles and its cities of enchantment; heroic little Montenegro, that defied Mercédès so successfully! What if we could explore that hidden land, so full of

honour, so apart from the world, pass through it from end to end, and even reach the borderland of savage Albania! Why should we not try to penetrate to the very end of motorland? With the experience we have gained we could make special arrangements ahead. Besides, Sheila and I want to 'do' Dalmatia — that exquisite Riviera. You remember how, last year, when at Ragusa, we were forced to abandon our tour by the uprising caused by Austria's annexation—our dash back to civilisation, that was more sporting than pleasant."

"Those beautiful old cities of the Adriatic," Dorothy chimed in, clasping her hands and looking at the falling embers. "Roy and I visited them by boat from Trieste some years ago—Spalato and Roman Salona, Zara, Trau, Ragusa and the majestic Bocche, overshadowed by the Land of the Black Mountain. I have always longed to go back there to dream and dream among the scenes of the past."

"We could strike the Alps at Interlaken," I continued; "then, as fancy takes us, cross the Gotthard or Simplon, and so into Tirol by the Stelvio, Aprica, Tonale or Rolle, all of which we know so well. Besides, the new Dolomitten Strasse over the Pordoi (an old friend) and the Falzarego passes should be open by now, through Styria into Croatia; then, by the way Sheila and I went last year, through Kostajnica, Banjaluka, Jajce, Sarájevo and Mostar to Ragusa."

Dorothy clapped her hands, exclaiming how like the names sounded to the Arabian Nights.

"When we get to Sarájevo couldn't we make a dash for the Serbian frontier, that we were told was impossible last year?" Sheila interposed. (This was, I knew, a bait for Ken, who swallowed it whole; the prospect of new ground always appealed strongly to his nature.)

"But of all our journey Montenegro will be the cream," I suggested. "I know for a fact that no strange car has

ever passed Cetinje, and if we can only get Mercédès across the Bocche to Cattaro, the Land of the Black Mountain lies open. Nikšić, Podgorica, Antivari, Dolcigno and Skutari will not call in vain. Oh, what a land, what a Land of Promise ! " I could not help exclaiming.

There was no bridge that night, though it was late when we retired ; our *partie carrée* was far too busily occupied. Much had to be arranged. Engagements for the next four months had to be cancelled, our travelling wardrobe to be discussed ; it had been decided to revert absolutely to the old days and to carry everything with us. Save for Rodgers, we should take no servants, neither would we have any luggage sent on ahead. We should travel as light as possible, taking only absolute necessaries, and as we would not stay more than a night in any fashionable resort we would be able to squeeze four months' luggage on to Mercédès ; in fact, we should be ready to face whatever might lie before us, taking the good with the bad, willing to rough things if need be. So we retired to rest—or rather to dream of the days before us and of our journey into the Land of Promise.

The next five days were spent in hurry and bustle. Whilst the others attended to social affairs I was occupied every moment of the time putting Mercédès together. For the benefit of those who are interested in these things, I am going to give a short description of Mercédès, while to those who care not for such matters let them skip the following paragraphs.

When the old " 60 " with her " rocker " valves began to pall, the Cannstadt Company, at the request of five of their most influential purchasers, designed and made five cars of a totally different type ; they were fifteen months on order, and were to be something special, even for a Mercédès, being rated at 70 h.p. It so happened that through illness one of the five original purchasers was unable to take

delivery, and my father, availing himself of the chance, was able to step in and so become the possessor of one of these new wonders. The car therefore came straight into my hands, first as a two-seater and then in her present form. Four years of almost continuous touring have taught me exactly what is necessary and what may be dispensed with. For instance, Mercédès can carry ten gallons of oil in fixed tanks or spare tins at a pinch, thirty-four gallons of petrol in all, enough for a good 300 miles. The head-lamps turn with the wheel, and the side-lamps are upon long swinging arms so as to shine in any direction—ahead, sideways or full astern, upon the dash or down on to the engine. The body is a Roi de Belges by Rothchild, and fitted with many conveniences, a glass screen and canopy of a style seldom seen; also, she possesses a 20-inch steering wheel (invaluable when on the Alps). Upon the dash a watch and two aneroid barometers, with coarse and fine scale, speed indicator and milometer. The luggage is made specially for the car, dust-proof boxes fitting into different places. There is also a map-box, which when full weighs nearly fifty pounds. Upon the top of the canopy is *le dernier cri*. It is a rounded cover, raised some eighteen inches in the centre and hinged at both sides, so that it can be easily opened. This was a heaven-sent receptacle for everything—ladies' hats and light packages, inner tubes, luncheon and tea-baskets, provisions and a thousand and one other things; in fact, whenever we purchased anything at some place or other and were at a loss to know where to stow it, the solution always was " put it on the roof," and on the roof it invariably was placed. Of tyres we carried five, two fixed at the back to the tonneau and two on the driving side, the remaining one on the roof. We used detachable rims, and for the back wheels studded tyres. It would be mere advertisement to mention any particular make of tyre, and I think I have

tried nearly every known one. There is no denying the fact that Mercédès devours tyres with an appetite that is never satisfied. Of inner tubes we carried some sixteen in all, spares of every kind, including a blow-lamp and a very complete set of tools in grooved drawers, two jacks and two pumps. Indeed, we are quite capable of doing any ordinary engineering job that may crop up, and, as Dorothy says, carry a whole "shop" about with us.

Then there will be our five selves and luggage for four months, in addition to our coats for different climes, and I must not forget to mention several spare coils of rope in case of difficulties, for Mercédès has been pulled out of some peculiar scrapes in her time.

I suppose I should now give a short description of our party.

Kenneth Graham, an old school chum, is tall (six feet one), fair and a thorough sportsman. Dorothy (my sister and his wife) is a brunette—but one must have recourse to Ken to gain a fair idea of her charms. Sheila (his sister and my wife) is—well, just Sheila, fair as a summer's morn, with a nature divine, and even had I the space I could scarce find words to describe HER; of myself, Roy Trevor, I need say little, save to mention that I am dark, not very tall, and have always had a passion for travel. Stay, I had almost overlooked Rodgers. He was with us upon our last tour, and I could never wish for a more cheerful follower.

That, I think, completes everything and everybody, and it was just five days after our conversation in the library, or rather upon the sixth morning, that Mercédès stood ready under the *porte-cochère* while the luggage was being packed. The weather was still unsettled, thunder rumbled a distant warning, and though the temperature was fairly high the wind was tinged with rain. Altogether it was about as unpromising an outlook as could well be imagined.

Little, however, we cared for the weather ; our minds were too full of the adventures in store. Besides, we were busy arranging matters up to the moment of starting.

How like the old days it was, Dorothy and Ken in the tonneau, Sheila driving and I by her side. Rodgers started the motor and took his place at my feet, curling himself behind the dash. "*En avant!*" Sheila exclaimed, and slipping in the "first" she lifted her foot off the clutch. A minute later we were speeding along a Sussex lane *en route* for Folkestone. It is not my intention to describe our journey minutely as far as Styria. We passed over much-motored roads, many of which I have, by the way, chronicled elsewhere. We spent a night at Folkestone, for the Channel was rough, and crossed next morning. Mercédès is well known to the Service, and every facility was accorded us. Two days we spent in Paris for the benefit of the ladies, and then headed for Switzerland via Troyes and Besançon, then on to Pontarlier upon the frontier, over the border to Neufchâtel, Berne, Thun, and slept that night at Interlaken. From Interlaken we passed to the Rhone Valley at Aigle, thence to Brigue. A few days upon the Simplon before descending to the Italian lakes. Maggiore, Lugano and Como passed before us like a mirage, along the rich Val Tellina, with its thousand sad memories, brought us to the foot of the Stelvio Pass, the giant of the Alps, the junction of three countries. We were upon old ground indeed. I think we have passed over every motorable Alpine pass at least twice and many six times and more. Once in Tirol we passed through hot Meran and noisy Bozen without halting, turning down the dusty Brenner and, ere reaching Trento, climbed the 3000 feet into the mountains on our left to Predazzo. Though we were at the foot of the Rolle and Karer, we passed between them, seeking an old and favourite spot far from civilisation, right in the heart of the giant dolomites, the summit of the Pordoi.

Four years ago we had ascended the road ere it had been officially opened to traffic, and stayed at the little hotel then just built upon the lonely summit. Alas, it has since become known, and though retaining its incomparable grandeur of position, prosperity has touched the little building and floods of tourists flock thither. Four years ago the road over the Falzarego Pass was just begun, and the day we arrived at the tiny hotel was expected to take place the opening of the new highway, thus putting Cortina d'Ampezzo in direct communication with Bozen and the Southern Brenner. A few days soon flitted away amidst such scenes and news came that the new road was open. I think Mercédès was the first car to pass over the rough surface, for hundreds of workmen were still at work, and we had to face several miles of uncrushed metal. The new road, the "Dolomitten Strasse," as it is called, will by now be completely finished, and the finest Alpine road in existence. The scenery is magnificent, naked dolomites tower upon every side, and one is lifted from the fertile valley till the very road is cut out of their jagged brown sides. It is a pass that one can never forget, and we shall often return to live again in the enchantment it offers. Once in the Pusterthal Valley we turned to the right, passing into Styria and through Klagenfurt to Marburg. We are now due south of Vienna, and it is from here that our journey proper commences. We had had some slight trouble with horses upon nearing this town, but there was nothing to indicate what a great change would take place during the next two days, and this brings me to—Chapter I.

PART I

BOSNIA AND THE HERZEGOVINA

Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, and beams ever shine,
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the Virgins are soft as the roses that twine
And all save the spirit of man is divine?
'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the Land of the Sun—
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell,
Are the hearts that they bear, and the tales that they tell.

BYRON.

MY BALKAN TOUR

CHAPTER I

"THE FRINGE OF THE ORIENT"

DEPARTURE FROM MARBURG—CILLI—ENTERING CROATIA—AGRAM—DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN—*EN ROUTE* FOR BOSNIA—GIPSIES—KOSTAJNICA—SHORT HISTORY OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

THERE is nothing in Marburg to remind the traveller that he is almost within touch of Turkey in Europe. Many cars make Marburg the turning-place between Vienna and the Pusterthal, hurrying away after spending one night, quite ignorant of what lies so near, just as a starving prospector may pass many times over the very ground that contains a rich vein of gold, and yet Fortune deny him what, with a fickle cast of the dice, she will shower upon some stranger. In such a way we had passed through Marburg twice before; the old Schlassberg at Gratz (upon the road to Vienna) never whispered to us its secret; true, we knew it had been erected some time during the Middle Ages, but we never stayed to listen to the tales of war, of the hoards of dark-skinned invaders thirsting for conquest, that those old walls have to tell, as they gaze down placidly upon the busy streets. It is

a silent yet eloquent reminder, to those who understand, of the dark shadow that once overhung Christian Europe. These ruined and massive walls were erected with feverish haste in the fifteenth century, with the object of endeavouring to stay the formidable wave of Moslem conquest. Even when the great terror had passed, when Turkish power was crushed and beaten, the old walls played no mean part. During the Napoleonic wars, with a garrison of only five hundred Austrians, they successfully defied General Macdonald himself, a feat which led to the blowing-up of the fortifications during the armistice. Gratz is fifty miles to the north, and does not, of course, lie in our present path, but it is as well to recall the first landmark of that sinister history whose every phase and deed we shall follow so closely.

Marburg has little of interest. It is the centre of the fruit and wine cultivation, and the second town in Styria. The streets are modern, while the dress of the people is that of Vienna or London. Upon our last tour Sheila and I had stayed a night here, and continuing, as we thought, the Pusterthal, had entered Croatia, found Warasdin, and so drifted on to Agram. The first part of the road had been rather bad, narrow and stony, so that this time we determined, if possible, to proceed in another direction. Our maps showed a road directly south, some forty-five miles to Cilli, and thence another fifty miles to Agram. Of course it is impossible to obtain any reliable information locally, and one must depend solely upon oneself. As for maps, there are few really reliable ones south of Marburg, save the Austrian military survey maps, of which we possessed a set, and a large sketch map printed in Fiume.

The morning, following its usual custom, dawned bright and warm, and we were in high spirits at the thought that our journey was really to commence at last. With a final look at the crowd of modern figures, who had as

usual collected to witness our departure, we bid adieu to Marburg.

The road was excellent, though we had formidable trouble with horses ; nearly every animal we encountered showed its distaste by endeavouring to deposit driver and load in the nearest ditch, while one slovenly-harnessed mule made a determined effort to attain the driving-seat of the cart to which it was attached, by a series of backward gymnastics, a policy that resulted in the rapid vacation of their places by the two men in charge. The scenery is pleasing, but there is otherwise little to chronicle save the gradual change in the style of the houses—imperceptible around Marburg, now distinctly noticeable. I mean the almost total absence of the dark wooden chalets, so familiar during the journey through Switzerland, Tirol, Saltzberg and the Semmering. They now give place to plainer buildings coated with whitewash, the first and significant emblems of Slavonic influence, houses of another race ; the gables are less pronounced, the roof does not overhang and the windows become smaller and smaller.

Right into Cilli the road continued broad and good, so that we rejoiced greatly at our lucky choice, a jubilation that, alas, was too premature. We were only some forty odd miles from Agram, and the next hour should see us in the Balkans. Cilli is so absolutely modern in style that it seems incredible that Agram should lie so near and Croatia, metaphorically speaking, be almost within touching distance. Cilli is just like scores of other Styrian villages and possesses little to interest the stranger, save that it shares with Stegna, in Istria, and Krka, in Dalmatia, the honour of being the place where that great doctor of the Church St. Jerome first saw the light. We halted in the main street to inquire the way, and a waiter rushing expectantly out of an adjacent small hostelry arrived breathless to answer our

question. To reach Agram from Cilli, he said, one must return to Marburg, proceed thence to Warasdin and so——

Here I flashed our survey map before him, pointing out the road following a river. To return to Marburg and Warasdin would mean quite 120 miles, whilst the map showed a decent road. Two or three other folk joined in with the same advice—the river road, they informed us with relish, being bad, narrow and never used. Argument proved unavailing ; we could not shake their opinion. Still, we determined to go on and make the best of things. We argued that it was only for forty miles, and thus comforting ourselves we sailed out of Cilli, little thinking that it would be five hours ere we sighted the capital of Croatia.

The road lies upon the right-hand bank of the river, and the views are enchanting. Rich woods cover the hill-sides, as though with a warm blanket, and each turn of the stream reveals fresh beauties. Gradually the road becomes narrower and narrower and, as we proceed, leaves the water's edge and winds up and down the hill-side, finally degenerating into a mere mule track through the thick woods. Here and there it is covered with sharp loose stones, looking for all the world like a disused cart track ; the branches of the trees sweep against our faces, and altogether it is quite a novel experience.

We are now in the Crown lands of Hungary and entering Croatia, that province so loyal to its faith, so intensely patriotic and proud of its own brave history. Croatia had been a separate state long ere 1190, which date signifies its alliance with Hungary. For centuries Croatia remained true to Hungary, braving many ills thereby, yet all the time cherishing a fervent patriotism, so that to-day she is still, to all intents and purposes, a separate nation, though now part of the great Austrian-

Hungarian Empire. We quickly began to notice a change in the dress of the inhabitants. The men wear long white sack-coats reaching to the knees, huge wide trousers, bare arms from the shoulders and bare feet. Especially among the women, the dress becomes more and more picturesque, a forerunner of what is to come: short white dresses reaching to the knees, coloured shawls, and bound round their foreheads were brilliantly coloured handkerchiefs tied with a large knot under the chin. As we crawled along the awful track the peasants showed great surprise, throwing down their spades and rakes and rushing to the road-side, gazing in evident wonder at the unusual sight of a large white car, bumping and jolting as it forced its way over a road it completely filled.

Horses and bullocks proved a source of much trouble, often having to be unharnessed and led into a neighbouring yard or somewhere away from the road. One horse, with diabolic cunning, almost succeeded in placing its driver in the river, but by a veritable miracle was prevented at the last moment. Now and then, while passing through some little hamlet, the road would suddenly blossom out into a good third-rate English lane, till upon leaving the last hut it would again degenerate into a woodland track. At one place, where our path led through a farmyard, we had serious doubts as to whether we had lost the way and were upon some private land. We stopped to inquire the road. An old man, chopping wood, suspended operations to answer our questions; he was a large-boned, broad-chested specimen, and approached us in a manner that conveyed the idea of being ready to bolt at the first sign of Mercédès exploding. He evidently did not comprehend our question until I had tried three pronunciations for Agram; Zagreb in Slavonic, and Zágráb in Hungarian. He nodded his head and pointed straight on; we were about to drive

away after thanking him when he made a motion of inquiry, and ejaculated something in a language or dialect I did not understand. Scanning our faces he tried again, and with a few German words added, we grasped his meaning. "Where came we from?" "From England," I answered. Six times I essayed to pronounce "England" in Hungarian, and at last he understood. "From England—*England*—with *that!*" and he pointed a trembling finger at Mercédès, gazing at her as though fascinated. "Yes, yes," we answered, driving it into his intellect by sheer repetition. The old man dropped his hands, clasped them beneath his chin and, turning his wrinkled face to heaven, intoned a prayer for our hardihood. Continuing our way we bumped and jolted along, hoping that we should not come upon any obstructions; the thick foliage hid everything, and we saw nothing of our surroundings.

About six miles before reaching Agram the road breaks into more open country and the hills open out at the entrance to a large plain. It was here we met a party of peasant women carrying baskets of grapes upon their heads; they were gorgeously apparelled with aprons of brilliant colours, great metal ear-rings hung from both ears, and they walked with a very graceful swing.

By the time Agram came into view we had spent nearly five hours upon the journey from Cilli and were particularly pleased to reach the end. A journey such as this is far more trying than, say, 150 miles in France, and extremely tiring. Had I to make the journey again I would rather choose the other road via Warasdin, which, taken all round, is vastly superior. Agram, of course, I knew, having stayed there twice before; however, we determined to remain a day in order to see this fervently Catholic capital. Directly one enters the town one feels that there is a difference from the towns one has left. The streets are freely sprinkled with colours;

here and there among the ordinary-dressed folk are many curiously clothed peasants of both sexes, half-mythical figures that might have stepped out of a picture-book. Rough sheep-skin coats, with the white fleece outside; large-boned men with heavy sun-tanned faces, buxom women in loose white bodices, white pleated skirts and brilliant aprons, speak of another race; while the lettering above the shops and the advertisements upon the walls and placards are pure Russian, similar to what are to be seen in Petersburg. The very air seems changed, and one commences at last to realise how close lies the land of the Moslem. We had to light our lamps just before entering the town; luckily I knew the way well, so that we quickly found our hotel and brought a somewhat arduous day to an end.

Agram is the embodiment of the Croat dream and sends representatives to the National Diet. The buildings are modern and designed on rather an ambitious scale; however, the effect is very successful and gives a good appearance, especially as the town is well planned. Croatia may well be proud of Agram, for it is in its way an ideal little capital and reflects great credit upon its country. The local government of Croatia has always been and is an intensely patriotic institution, devoted to the welfare of the State, harbouring free thought in its strictest and purest sense, encouraging thrift, and loyal to Austria so long as she herself respects her liberties. Like Bergamo, Agram has two towns, the upper containing the cathedral and the Palace of the Bans (this high ground is called by the natives "Madved," or "the Bear"); the lower town contains the market-place and several public edifices. Far away stretches the blue haze of the mountains of Bosnia, giving Agram its name "Zagreb," which in Slavonic signifies "beyond the rocks."

To the stranger the crowning glory of the city is the market. It has been said that the country dresses of

Croatia are collectively more brilliant than those of any other state, therefore it can be easily imagined what a blaze of colour met our eyes next morning as we strolled after breakfast to the market square. Evans has aptly likened the scene to a bed of red and white geraniums. Hundreds of wooden stalls groan under the weight of luscious fruit ; ripe pears and peaches, grapes and huge melons tempt the parched. Beside each stall stand the peasants who have brought in their merchandise. It is one huge combination of life and colour, the sun blazes down fiercely out of a sky of intense blue, and the air is filled with a babel of sounds, Slavonic, Hungarian and familiar German. All the morning we wandered about, and in the afternoon paid a visit to the swimming-baths, which lie upon the swift-flowing Sava, a mile or more from the town, and enjoyed a glorious dip in the ice-cold water, afterwards visiting the upper town, from which a beautiful view over the flat plains beneath is spread out before the eye. Though Agram, as I said before, is architecturally modern, it has an undeniable charm of its own and is well worth seeing.

Our next journey lay into Bosnia ; upon our return last year Sheila and I made the distance from Banjaluka to Agram, some 140 miles, in the day ; but anyone who knows the type of road and bridges can well realise that this is rather too much. Again, we wished to take matters more moderately and so decided to stay at a little place called Kostajnica, upon the very border of Bosnia and Croatia and barely some sixty miles from Agram. This sounds little indeed, but each time we had taken this road previously we suffered grievous trouble through finding dangerous bridges, and once had to ford a large river, which was an exceedingly ticklish operation. Horses too are a source of considerable delay and danger in Croatia, and as drink is one of the few curses of the country their drivers, seldom masters of their animals

when sober, cause road travellers many anxious moments. For these reasons we determined to make an early start and have plenty of time in hand for any surprises we might be treated to.

From the hotel our way passed through the market-place, where Mercédès caused some stir; then, turning our backs upon the gorgeous assemblage, we headed due south. The road is good and crosses an immense plain. Though very broad, it was covered inches deep in dust. Italy herself could not produce thicker or more disagreeable dust. Behind us it rose in volumes, immense clouds hanging in the air like a solid bank of fog, swirling round Mercédès and filling every crook and cranny with its whiteness. Our hair, faces and clothes were covered deep, and it penetrated our eyes, ears and throats with such persistence that we were almost suffocated. The horses we encountered were very restless, but great patience enabled us to pass them. The simple white dresses of the peasants were now relieved by a brilliant red scarf wound round the waist and red embroidered waistcoats. The men were large powerful fellows; and their wives and daughters also possessed massive physiques. But one thing that especially struck us was their cleanliness; the white clothes were spotless, their hands and faces without stain, save, of course, where hard work had left its traces. What soap and water and much scrubbing could do had been done, and they appeared to possess almost a Dutch-like love of cleanliness, very refreshing after some of the Italian villages we have passed through.

We were speeding gaily along when a back tyre burst, and we stopped to repair damage. Scarcely had Rodgers unpacked the levers than a swarm of gipsy children emerged from a wood near by, and with cries of delight came running towards us, standing in wonder round Mercédès. But children never are awe-

struck for long, especially gipsy children, and their natural buoyancy soon overcame their timidity ; they clamoured round us, begging in a shrill chorus, almost deafening. One or two gipsy women now appeared in the distance, and we perceived the tents of a large colony of these folk about half a mile away. The Hungarian Crown lands contain large quantities of these wandering gipsies, who, with the Magyars, Roumanians, Germans, Stovakians, Croats, Serbians and Jews, help to make up their remarkable inhabitants. The gipsies are all the world over a race apart, and here, like those at Granada, they congregate in large colonies. The children formed a very striking contrast to those of the white-frocked peasantry we had passed : dark-haired and dark-skinned, with twinkling eyes, they gathered round us with more assurance than respect. Gipsies of the wildest type they were, and we dreaded lest the remainder of the band should put in an appearance. We tried to speak to them, but could hardly hit upon any language in common ; theirs seemed a weird mixture of bastard Spanish interwoven with Turkish words, mixed with many Magyar gutturals.

The new cover fitted, we climbed to our places, and amidst a weird chorus of farewells resumed our journey. Soon we came upon the encampment ; some half-dozen large tents, not unlike wigwams, stood in a clearing, and round them were grouped their motley owners. Upon perceiving us they jumped to their feet and rushed to the roadside. I have never seen a wilder colony, even the gipsies of San Miguel el Alto, at Granada, fall into insignificance by comparison. Coloured kerchiefs were bound round their brows, their beards and moustaches were almost jet-black, their coloured shirts, open at the neck, showed dark, muscular chests. Some wore tattered remnants of once modern trousers, which might have graced *chic* Vienna ; others used raw skins of sheep and

goats. Many had Turkish shoes with pointed toes, others old boots of a bygone age. The women were wild-looking creatures, faces tanned by exposure, olive-skinned, out of which their eyes gleamed brightly. Their hair, black as ink, was parted down the middle and worn in plaits ; their dresses varied in the extreme. But their life under the open skies had given to them the signs of perfect health, and a carriage and bearing that comes alone to these veritable children of Nature. We did not stop to gratify our (and their) curiosity, but waving our hands in response to their strange cries quickly vanished in a cloud of dust.

The road traverses some magnificently wooded country, and presently we pass through Sissek, whose prosperous and modern appearance gives but little idea of the mighty city that once rose upon this spot. Long before Rome became mistress of the world, Segestica, chief of the great Celtic cities, flourished here ; from her gates led the great trade routes, her commerce was supreme, her armies invincible.

The Roman legions, sweeping north and east, reached Segestica. Twice they sought to reduce the rich city, and twice they were hurled from her walls, until Augustus himself stormed her, and at last she fell.

Segestica became Siscia, first a stationary camp for the cohorts of Augustus, then the winter quarters for Tiberius in his Pannonian war, afterwards being created the seat of military government for the world by Septimius Severus. The great colony of Roman citizens formed the city into a republic and, under Vespasian, Siscia Septimius became chief city of Upper Pannonia.

Grown now to great estate, so great indeed that the ancient civilisation of Segestica is rough and paltry in comparison, Siscia possessed her own mint, sharing with her foster-mother, Rome, the supreme privilege of stamping her impression upon the imperial coinage.

The old trade routes of Segestica were preserved and renewed, and Siscia now forms an important link between the north and the south, the east and the west. In the fourth century we find her classed as one of the five premier cities of the world, Rome, Constantinople, Carthage, Nicomedia, and Siscia. "Siscia," says Strabo, "lies at the confluence of many rivers, all navigable. It is at the foot of the Alps, whose streams bear to it much merchandise, Italian and other. These are borne in waggons from Aquileja over Ocra, the lowest part of the Alps, to Nauportus, and thence by the Corcoras into the Save—and so to Siscia. The wine and oil, wafted from more southern climes into the havens of that Venice of Roman Adria; the carpets and woollens of Patavium that rumbled into her markets by the Æmilian Way; the furs and amber that the barbarian dealers bore her from the cold shores of the Baltic and Fennic forests; perhaps, too, her own costly wine stored up in wooden barrels—all these, we may believe, and more, were piled on the Aquilejan waggons and dragged up the Alpine steep by oxen, thence to be floated down the Save to the Siscian wharves. In the markets of Siscia the Aquilejese merchants might lay in their stock of grain, or hides, or keen Noric steel, and take their pick of cattle or tattooed Illyrian slaves. From the whole of Eastern Europe wares might flow together here, for not only was Siscia at the confluence of the Save and Kulpa, but she was at the junction of great roads, which, with their branches, connected her with the Upper and Lower Danube, with the interior of Dalmatia as well as her coast land, and with Nauportus and Italy, overland." [1] Siscia bears the proud boast that she received Christianity long before her sister cities, and suffered under the persecution of Diocletian, that steadfast upholder of the old gods; later she became linked with Salona, even sur-

[1] Evans.

viving the great invasion of the Slavs that razed Salona to the ground.

As Celtic Segestica succumbed to Roman Siscia, so Roman Siscia in her turn becomes Slavonian Siscia, and the ninth century sees her the seat of a Slav prince. A century later she suffers by the Frankish invasion, and her wondrous history, traced back for over thirteen hundred years, comes to a deplorable end in her total destruction by the savage Magyars.

The road, though fair, is not particularly good; but, unfortunately, the authorities were constructing new bridges, and in consequence we suffered two very narrow escapes indeed. It was late in the afternoon when we reached Croatian Kostajnica and sought the little inn that is the sole refuge for stranded travellers. The place, though very small, is quite clean and vastly superior to many posadas of the same size in Spain and Italy.

The walls of the low-roofed room where meals are served are painted with interesting pictures of Kostajnica of the eighteenth century. Then was Bosnian Kostajnica and Croatian Kostajnica connected by a bridge over the Unna, and commanded upon the Bosnian shore by an old Turkish fort from which waved the flag of the crescent.

In the centre is a small island, where in olden times the border people could meet in peace and transact business. One is now, as you know, upon the borderland of east and west, the fringe of the Orient, and the most fiercely defended frontier in history. The natives call this side of the Unna Europe and the other Asia, and how true this description is we are to judge upon the morrow. Christians and Moslems glare across the river at one another; for four centuries the bitterest warfare was carried on, and even to-day there exists a deadly feud between the two races. For centuries the followers of Allah ruled supreme across the river, making fierce

forays into Croatia, plundering the Christian, and as late as the occupation of Bosnia by Austria, in 1878, the feuds continued.

" Les incursions terribles et fréquentes des Turcs, depuis ce pays jusqu'en Carmole, en Styrie, et Carinthie, ne sont-elles pas déjà des indications suffisantes des entreprises qu'un ennemi habile, posté en Bosnie, pourrait se permettre presque impunément," says Boué, and goes on to relate how " le pascha Jakoupes pénétra par la Croatia jusqu'à Cilly et Pettau en Styria."

Before I proceed further I should like to give a short summary of the history of this position of the Western Balkans, as our journey is so closely associated with many of the prominent names and places.

The land we are now in was no doubt the ancient Illyricum of mythical memory, though of the original Illyrians there is but little known, save of their being an offshoot of the great Hallstatt people who flourished under " La Tène," civilisation following its chief characteristic in the perfection of metal weapons and arts and manufactures. They were essentially a warlike race, tattooing their bodies and offering human sacrifices to fierce gods, even as the early Britons did. There are records of Greek intercourse with the original inhabitants on the coast, and about 350 years B.C. great hordes of Gauls, coming from no one knows where in the interior, swept over Bosnia, driving the Illyrians into what is now known as the Herzegovina. Alexander the Great subdued the Gaul conquerors after much fighting, but upon his death they soon recovered and once more blossomed into a fierce fighting nation. They then held all Dalmatia and developed the gentle art of piracy. So proficient did they become, that they made the great mistake of attacking the Roman trade, to such an extent as to bring down upon their heads the wrath of the mistress of the world ; Roman galleys were sent against them, and in the second

century B.C. the first legion of Rome landed in Dalmatia, defeated Queen Teuta, drove her inland and forced her to pay an annual tribute to Rome. By the way, it is interesting to note how the word Dalmatia originated. The Illyrians and Gauls, finding themselves attacked by a common enemy, forgot their private quarrels and banded themselves together in order to turn as strong a front to the foe as possible. Their head-quarters were at a town called Delminium, and they became known as Dalmatians, from which, of course, we arrive at Dalmatia. For over a hundred years they fought valiantly, but the trained arms of Rome were irresistible; from valley to valley they were driven, until in the year 35 B.C. the whole of the Adriatic coast, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, succumbed to Rome and became one of the Imperial provinces under the title of Illyricum. Though the Illyrians were now subject to Rome, they nevertheless played no mean part in the history of the Great Republic, serving in her armies, and even supplying her with four great Emperors, Aurelian, Claudius II, Diocletian and Maximian, all of Illyrian birth. To-day the present inhabitants of Albania, the Skipetars, are the real descendants of the original Illyrians who held the Balkans before the Roman conquest, or even that of the Gauls. Thompson believes that Christianity was first introduced by St. Paul at a very early date and that many converts were made. However this may be, the Emperor Diocletian, abdicating at Nicomedia in 305 A.D., returned to end his days in his native land, and took up his residence in his palace near the Roman city of Salona, where Spalato stands to-day. The leaning of Constantine to Christianity did not influence him, and, true to the old gods, he instituted a terrible persecution against the Christians. But the decline of the Roman Empire was in sight; already the Northern tribes were forcing the Romans to the sea until they alone held the coast towns of the

Adriatic. Even then they were not free from attack, and upon the fall of the Western Empire in 476 A.D. Dalmatia succumbed to the sway of the Ostrogoths, who held the land for sixty years, during which Justinian waged a twenty years' war with them.

While Dalmatia was in the throes of the war between the Byzantine Greeks and the Hungarian Ostrogoths there came the first warning of the future conquerors, the Slavs, in 548, and again three years later. But, in spite of their invasion, the Byzantine conquerors wrested Dalmatia from the Ostrogoths, and held it until, in 598, came the greatest invasion of all, that of the Slavs and Avars (a kindred race), who, in one enormous wave, overran the whole of the Balkans. Dalmatia suffered terribly; her coast towns were ruined, Salona, Zadera, Epidaurus were practically wiped out.

For more than eight and a half centuries the Slavs held the land, and it was only in the middle of the fourteenth century that they finally succumbed to the Moslem. To-day the Slav element forms by far the greater portion of the inhabitants, and that great nation has left a mark which three centuries of Turkish administration has failed to obliterate. It was in the seventh century that Christianity was officially introduced, if I may use the expression, but it was not until two centuries later that paganism finally died in its last stronghold, the Narenta Valley. Perhaps the greatest of all the misfortunes of this unlucky land, that from its earliest infancy seems to have been given up to war and pillage, was the manner in which the divine doctrine of Christ was introduced. The Serbs, who formed the majority, were converted by missionaries from Greece and embraced the Orthodox Church, while Rome sent her preachers to the Croats, who became fervent Catholics. Had the Croats and Serbs embraced the one faith, Bosnia and Herzegovina might have been in the position of Monte-

negro or Bulgaria to-day. The King of Zeta (whose kingdom pretty well corresponds to the limits of Montenegro as we know it) subdued the Bans, or princes of Bosnia, and founded a great Serb kingdom. This in 1082, and two hundred years later there came upon the scene a man whose ambition was only equalled by his love of war—the Tzar Dušhan. He was the greatest of all the Serbian kings, a very twelfth-century Napoleon. Meanwhile the Byzantine Empire was fast losing its power, and Dušhan conceived the brilliant idea of founding a great Serb kingdom with Constantinople as its capital. He called every Serb to his standard, and had they responded with loyal unity it is quite possible he might have succeeded, and the Balkans would have been coloured differently on the map to-day.

But Bosnia was at that moment fighting against Hungary, which country the Pope was using as a weapon against the Bogomile heresy, that had taken firm root in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Among the Bosnian Bans there stands out one, Kulin, whose banship spelt prosperity for his country, and it was in his reign that the new faith, which had already made great headway in Bulgaria, was introduced into Bosnia, some say by a Bulgarian priest called Bogomile. It was a strange, ascetic faith; believing in the strict tenets of Christianity, it forbade all enjoyment. The earth and all therein was the devil's, hence water, fire and food were all forbidden, and only enough nourishment taken to support actual life. Marriage was forbidden, as was allegiance to princes and lords; all religious ceremonies were denounced, the cross and the Virgin Mary never mentioned, and altogether it was as much opposed as possible to the churches of Rome and Greece. Quickly the new faith spread, and despite all the Pope could do, thrived, even under oppression, with astounding rapidity. The Roman Pontiffs,

who at this time wielded enormous power and were, in fact, the real dictators of Europe, claimed Bosnia and Dalmatia as a legacy from the Roman Empire and endeavoured to stamp out the heresy. Until the conquest by the Turks in the middle of the fourteenth century they worked unceasingly to crush the new faith, sometimes by forcing the intervention of Hungary, whose kings were ever the faithful sons of the Church, and when Bans under the thumb of Rome ruled Bosnia instituted the Inquisition with terrible results. The great Serbian hope fell to pieces upon the field of Kossovo, when the Bosnian Ban, Stjepan Tvrtko, withdrew his forces from attacking the Turk and unworthily conquered Dalmatia and Croatia, over which he proclaimed himself king. In 1398 Sultan Bajazid defeated Sigismund of Hungary at Nicopolis and overran Bosnia with an army of fierce Turks. From this time onward the land was split up into parties, king succeeding king, ever fighting against the Turks upon one hand and against the Hungarians—egged on by the Pope—upon the other. Never for a moment did the papal magnates cease their persecutions, and so great was the hatred of Roman Catholicism that when Stjepan Ostoja, a later king of Bosnia, wished to place himself under the protection of Hungary, his subjects, fearing the influence of Rome, promptly dethroned him, and Stjepan Tvrtko II was elected to fill his place. In 1443 Stjepan Thomas succeeded Tvrtko III and reigned for seventeen years, a long reign for the slippery throne of Bosnia. Very soon he proved a pious son of the Church, and, under the advice of Cardinal Carvajal, the Papal legate, instituted a terrible persecution, with the Inquisition as its centre. His Bogomile subjects were everywhere seized and tortured as heretics, until at last they turned to the Turks for aid. He is said to have hounded forty thousand of them from their homes; finally he met a fitting end, being assassinated by his

stepbrother, Radivoj, and his son Stjepan. Stjepan Tomascević, the last king of Bosnia, now seized the throne. He was even more bitter than his father against the Bogomiles, and it was little wonder that they welcomed the Turks as saviour when, in 1463, Muhammed II and a large army entered Bosnia.

Hunted from stronghold to stronghold, Tomascević was finally slain at Jajce, being skinned alive by Muhammed, it is believed. From then until 1878 these lands disappeared from view, sunken into the great sea of Moslemism, and it was not until the awful massacres of the Christians in 1876 that Austria was forced to send troops across the Unna. The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 gave Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, who administered the government, though the provinces still owed allegiance to the Sultan.

On October 7th, 1908, Austria flouted the Berlin Treaty by seizing Bosnia and Herzegovina and proclaiming them as parts of her empire, thus forcing the Sultan to renounce even the nominal allegiance of his subjects in these provinces. As the Christian population of the south are pure Slavs, Serbia and Montenegro protested strongly, whilst Russia, who regards herself as the Heaven-sent protector of the smaller Balkan States, seconded the protest. There then followed, perhaps, one of the greatest pieces of diplomacy ever practised by the wily Teuton: immediately upon the heels of Russia's protest came the German answer, troops were ostensibly massed upon the eastern frontier, and the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg gravely intimated to the Russian Ministry that Germany would deeply resent any opposition to Austria's new policy, and that such resentment would take active form. Against Germany and Austria united Russia could do nothing. Other powers intervened with mild protests, and were met by resolute scowls, retiring meekly, none desiring

war. Austria thereupon tendered as compensation to Turkey the sum of £2,000,000 and the province of Novi-Pazar (which she occupied and which, by the way, was quite useless to her), and so Turkey, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro had perforce reluctantly to give way. How the Slavs hate the Catholics one can easily see, and Austria has done nothing as yet to reward the Teuton.

What result Germany's move will have upon the future of Europe few have any conception, her unity with Austria means five seaports and a long fringe of the Adriatic coast besides Austria's new fleet of Dreadnoughts; for Germany will, when *der tag* comes, claim the debt from Austria. Notice I do not mention Hungary, for it was to Austria and Austria alone that Germany offered her aid. Hungary hates the Teuton and all his works, and when the great parting of the ways arrives it will not be to Germany that the Crown lands will look. Again I say, who can tell what far-reaching results may not be attained by this move on the part of Germany? It may make her master of the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Italian coast.

A tour through Austria's new dependencies would open the eyes of many a home diplomat, did he but note the perfect readiness of Austria for the bursting of the cloud that is forming over Europe. Wonderful as has been the war-history of these lands, the future may hold still more tragic scenes, and the Land of Promise may prove to be a promise, not of joy, but of war, red, red war.

It is a fascinating history, doubly so as we are upon the borderland of Bosnia, not a hundred miles from Jajce. Little wonder that Bosnia and Herzegovina are so little known to the general public. During the four centuries of Turkish administration these lands vanished from the eye of Europe, and it is only during the last few years that they have been made safe for travel. One may see a state of things unique in Europe, that

of a land practically Moslem in every sense of the word, and at the same time under a safe and progressive Government.

Our minds filled with the strange and marvellous history of the land we were about to enter upon the morrow, we retired for the night.

CHAPTER II

INTO THE LAND OF PROMISE

ENTERING BOSNIA—FIRST MOSQUE—EASTERN SCENES—VEILED WOMEN — PRJEDOR — BANJALUKA — STROLL THROUGH THE TOWN—SUNSET—CALL TO PRAYER—RAMADAN—THE DRAGON OF BOSNIA—FASCINATION OF THE MARKET—HISTORY—GORGES OF THE VRBAS—ADVENTURES WITH HORSES—MAGNIFICENT SCENERY—PILGRIMAGE SHRINE.

NEXT morning we rose early in anticipation of the change that the next hour would see. After a breakfast of excellent coffee and bread we lost no time in getting under weigh. Like unto our arrival, a large crowd attended our departure, watching with breathless attention each bag being strapped in its place, and as we took our seats, and Rodgers seized the starting-handle, an excited gasp went round the circle. With a wave of our hands we had left the hospitable little hotel and were passing down a narrow street ; in a few moments we were crossing the river. At the end of the bridge stands the Turkish fort we had seen in the picture, and so perfect is its preservation that it might have stood for the same model to-day.

Directly we had passed its massive walls, with their sinister history, we were upon Bosnian soil. Had a fairy waved her enchanted wand over the scene a greater

THE SENTINEL OF TURKEY. KOSTAJNICA. BOSNIA

change could hardly have been effected. Save that the landscape remained the same, we might have been transported into the heart of Turkey.

The men were dressed in pure Turkish garb, wearing white shirts and coloured vests, heavily embroidered, a scarf of brilliant red and blue baggy trousers, tight from the knees downwards, their bare feet thrust into curious skin shoes turned up at the toes. Their faces were sunburnt, almost black, and they wore white turbans or, in many cases, red fezzes.

The road passed through a perfect little *čarčija* or bazaar, similar to those at Stamboul, the shops resembling large packing-cases, one side of which lets down. The interiors are filled with stock, bright-coloured cloth, or leather shoes of many shapes. Others are metal workshops, wherein half a dozen Oriental figures sit, cross-legged, hammering away industriously. At others round, flat loaves of bread were being exhibited to the common gaze upon long boards, while quaintly muffled figures handled one after the other, seeking for one that should seem a trifle heavier than its fellow.

To our left a pure white mosque raised its slender minaret into the sky.

A few Mahommedan women shuffled along, enveloped completely in voluminous black draperies, their heads hidden by white cloths, leaving only a narrow opening through which they gazed in a half-curious fashion as Mercédès bore us past.

This is Bosnian Kostajnica, as unlike its neighbour over the stream as light is to darkness. The Save and the Unna, flowing eastward into the Danube, divide Bosnia from Croatia, East from West, the Cross from the Crescent.

Flushed with triumph, the Osmali swept northward, Hungary fell at Mohacs and the world seemed at their feet. But Europe was roused, differences were forgotten,

the Pope and the Christian powers bound themselves together for very existence.

When at last the back of the Moslem conquest was broken and the Turk driven across the Save, the Cross was planted upon the near bank, and from the other the Crescent glared in impotent rage. Six hundred miles of frontier had to be garrisoned; at any spot a Moslem army might break through. Constant alertness, huge military camps, enormous expenses faced the Hapsburgs. Like the Romans of old they solved the great problem by apportioning the land along the frontier among the half-savage families of the neighbourhood. Many of these families lived together in one large dwelling, spending their time farming the land, but at a moment's notice springing to arms, ready to defend their homes and the territory of their king. When the Moslem became but a name in the land the importance of the military frontier gradually declined, and the great deeds of war and pillage, the blood that stained the waters crimson, and the centuries of hate themselves vanished into "the storied past." To-day there is little love lost between the peasants upon either bank, but the strong hand of Austria is year by year smoothing out the old troubles and endeavouring to bring about a better feeling between the two races.

There are two roads to Banjaluka—one turns to the left and follows the Save as far as Gradiska, and thence direct east. This is chiefly interesting for the fact that it passes through two large Tirolean colonies that Austria has founded, and to one who knows the quaint life of Bosnia the sight of these low-roofed homes is very curious. The other road passes through Prjedor and, to the stranger, is much more novel.

Leaving the last little wooden house, the road turns to the right and follows the valley of the Save, still enveloped in heavy mists, and we were quickly surrounded

A CHRISTIAN WOMAN WATER-CARRIER. (BOSNIA)

by a thick fog, so that for some eight miles we could only just grope our way along. The peasants one meets are strange in the extreme, looming up suddenly out of the mists like apparitions.

Our first glimpse was of an ancient wooden cart, innocent of springs, drawn by two plodding oxen, wherein some half-dozen people were sitting. One, an old man, wrinkled and weather-beaten, whose eyes had not lost their fire as they peered from beneath a ponderous turban of snowy whiteness, as though he remembered the massacres of thirty years ago, when every infidel dog was slain on sight by the faithful. Another was a fat, jolly-looking Turk in red fez and decked out in many colours. Three women, heavily veiled, sat huddled together upon the floor, and a couple of boys, miniature representations of the fat Turk, were perched, boy-like, upon the back rail. The oxen promptly shied at our appearance, the two boys fell backwards upon the three women, and the cart went half into the ditch. At a curious angle it bumped along for a few yards until the unconcerned driver in the red fez guided his animals back to the road.

Presently we passed through Prjedor, a small town of some five thousand inhabitants. A few modern houses mingle with the ancient wooden huts, and upon every side one sees evidences of Austrian rule. Smart officers in irreproachable uniform, and many soldiers, patrol the streets, jostling with the rough sheep-skins of the peasants. It is hard to realise that this little place can be the same that is mentioned by Vice-Consul Freeman in his report of 1876, where he says, " About a week ago the master of the Orthodox school at Prjedor was killed, and his head was paraded about the streets of the town upon a pole, to the sound of drums and music." Passing by here in 1876, M. Yriarte, who carefully followed the late uprising, writes : " L'assassinat des consuls de France et

d'Allemagne à Salonique a été le signal d'une Saint Barthélemy de chrétiens à Pryédor ; les journaux nous avaient apporté la nouvelle d'un massacre de tous les habitants catholiques ; mais l'enquête fixe les victimes de cent vingt et un."

It was then that Austria's army crossed the frontier to stop worse horrors. For more than two years (1878–80) her troops had to suppress a general rising, and some of the fiercest fighting took place. Nearly every town and village we pass through bears some memento, a stone cross or tablet, in honour of the brave Austrians who fell in defending the helpless Christians against their oppressors.

Those people who have merely travelled through these lands by train, and take but a short drive into the country from one civilised centre to another, can never form any true idea of the inner life of the real unspoilt country folk. It is where the train has not found its way, and where modern conveniences (even matches) are unknown, that the road traveller gains such wonderful advantages over his train-travelling *confrère*: the many little incidents and wonders of the road, the halt for a moment or so in some out-of-the-world village, where a group of excited peasants crush round, figures reminiscent of the Middle Ages, whose dress and customs are to-day exactly as were those of their ancestors centuries ago, and who are forced by the very novelty of a visit to give one a joyous welcome.

Between Prjedor and Banjaluka the road is undulating and passes through thickly wooded country. One is instantly struck by the silence of these forests, the total absence of song-birds, for, as we learnt afterwards, there are practically no game-laws in Bosnia and almost anything with life is liable to extinction, as was the *rayah* or Christian peasant thirty years ago.

Upon nearing Banjaluka, we passed several large

PEASANTS SHELTERING FROM THE INTERMINABLE HEAT. (BOSNIA)

monasteries, including the famous monastery of the Trappists.

These monks, driven from the Rhine, settled in Bosnia before the Austrian occupation, having received from the Sultan a grant of land near Banjaluka in 1868, just as during the fifteenth century the exiled Jews of Spain obtained refuge in Sarájevo.

The Trappists lead perhaps the hardest existence that ever fell to the lot of man: by virtue of their ascetic lives, they enjoy the trust and respect of the Turks and the Serbians, who regard the monks with no less reverence than do the Catholics. "For even the strictest Dervishes," says Ashboth, "do not lead such a stern life as the Trappists do. Catholics, Orthodox and Mohammedans, heard and convinced themselves that these men live in small cells, where there is only just room for a sack of straw; that after a short night's rest, during which they do not lay aside their white cowls, they begin their daily prayers and their useful labours at two o'clock in the morning; that they pass their days in unbroken silence, so as not to be disturbed in their celestial contemplations by worldly thoughts: that they speak only by special permission, and even such sins as they might in thought commit in the self-denying stern manner of life, they are at the pains of themselves punishing on each saint's day by cruel flagellation, the scourge and the straw sack together constituting their entire furniture."

The monks cultivate the ground, they embrace every trade, and are therefore self-supporting. They do much good among the poor, and have founded schools for those who desire to learn.

We reached Banjaluka early in the afternoon.. The hotel is remarkably good; instead of a small "khan," as one might expect, it is a large modern building, much patronised by the Austrian officers quartered there. We drove into an old-fashioned yard where a number of

white-bloused and red-turbaned Turks were chopping wood. The proprietor, an Austrian, welcomed us, and our luggage was carried to our rooms by a couple of porters who might have stepped out of ancient Bagdad.

Although Banjaluka is now the third largest town in Bosnia, it has dwindled sadly of late years. In Turkish times it was of considerable importance, and as early as 1400 was respected as a fortress of the utmost value.

Lying upon the left bank of the swift-flowing Vrbas, in a valley enclosed by mountains whose slopes form mile after mile of disused and uncared-for Turkish burial grounds, Banjaluka presents a truly Oriental appearance with its forty-five mosques and its white bazaars. The largest of the mosques stands in the main street and is flanked by bazaars. This is the Ferhadia-Dshamia mosque, built about the close of the sixteenth century. It is considered one of the most beautiful and perfect examples of its kind in the country. Ashboth relates how it was built by Christian money obtained by the Bosnian Vizier Ferhad Pasha, who defeated the Austrian General Auersperg at Radonja in 1576 and took his son prisoner. It was the latter's ransom that enabled the great mosque to be built. Round this sacred building native life is in full swing; streets of bazaars, with their rows of open shops and busy workers, are Eastern to the last degree. We sat in a small but spotlessly clean Turkish café at sundown, and while drinking the thick tepid Turkish coffee, whose sickly smell pervades every town and village, watched the quaint scene before us. A bright-faced boy in the prescribed costume brought us coffee in the small familiar Eastern jugs of hammered metal with long handles, and carefully poured the thick liquid into dainty round china cups, innocent of handles and supported, much as a boiled egg, in filigree copper holders. Turkish coffee is exquisite, having a very different flavour from that served at home under the same name as a great

STRANGE FOLK WHO CROWD AROUND US. (BOSNIA)

treat. The beans are not ground, but pounded, and the last mouthful, if one is foolish enough to take it, resembles a dose of wet sand. It is curious to read the account, written at the commencement of the seventeenth century by Bacon, concerning this Moslem habit of drinking coffee. He imparts his observations thus : " They have in Turkey," he wrote, " a drink called coffee, made of a berry of the same name, as black as soot, and of a strong scent, but not aromatical, which they take beaten into a powder, in water, as hot as they can drink it : and they take it and sit at it in their coffee houses, which are like our taverns."

The cigarettes are not unlike Russian ones in shape, with about half an inch of cardboard mouthpiece attached. The tobacco is very sweet and highly flavoured. Like the coffee, they are ridiculously cheap, the finest being about eight for the modest sum of twenty heller (two-pence), and the coffee is ten heller per cup. As we sat under the red-roofed shelter, we watched the twilight deepen into night. It was the time of the *muezzin*, the call to prayer, and each slender minaret twinkled with myriads of tiny lights, while from every side resounded the weird, yet plaintive cry of the priests. " *La illah il Allaha ! Mahommed rasul Allah,*" swelled the chorus, fresh voices joining in till the very air seemed steeped in sound. It is the first day of the holy month of *Ramadan*, the Lent of Islam, and we are specially favoured. Sunset has come and the faithful are free to break their fast, which has lasted since sunrise ; until now not even a cigarette may they indulge in. Quickly the bazaars are closed, by the simple experiment of lifting up the front, which has all day been used as a floor, and we noticed that the Moslem was not above using a padlock of Christian manufacture.

Coloured lights began to sparkle in every direction as we wandered slowly back. This is not Europe, no matter

what the map says, and we began to realise the local proverb that the Unna divides Europe from Asia. We had indeed stepped into the centre of a chapter of the *Arabian Nights*. The stars were twinkling brightly in a sky yet deep blue as we returned for dinner to the little hotel, charmed beyond measure.

There are many traces in the neighbourhood of Roman times, and at the baths of Gornji-Seher, which give Banjaluka its name, as the baths of the holy Luke the Evangelist, six hundred Roman coins were recently discovered. In pre-Turkish days, when Bosnia belonged to the great Slav dynasties, Jajce, a town some fifty miles distant and our destination for the morrow, reigned supreme in the north, Banjaluka being a mere village of no importance. For centuries Turkish, Croatian, Hungarian and Slav armies met and fought together, but so long as Jajce remained unconquered by the Turks, no town so near could flourish. However, when the Turks overran Bosnia in the middle of the fourteenth century, Banjaluka commenced to thrive, leaping in great bounds from a paltry collection of huts into a powerful stronghold, and upon the final fall of Jajce became a town of great importance. Under Moslem rule it attained its zenith, and it was here that Ali Pasha Etshimovitsh, a Bosnian by birth, defeated the Duke of Hildburghausen on August 4th, 1737.

Banjaluka now devoted itself to political questions, and was mixed up in the remarkable insurrection against the unbelieving "Gyaur-Sultan," led by "The Dragon of Bosnia," Hüssein Aga Berberli, whose subsequent history is well worth relating.

In the year 1831, immediately after the Russian war, Mahmud II, with Reshid Pasha, his Grand Vizier, commenced to carry out his long-cherished series of reforms, which included the abolition of the Janizaries. Now it so happened that the ranks of the Janizaries

THE GRACEFUL WHITE-DOMED FERHADIA-DSHAMIA MOSQUE. (BANJALUKA)

contained many Bosnian nobles, who were ever averse to progression of any kind. This act of Mahmud stirred up deep feeling in Bosnia, and the match was applied to the train by Hüssein Aga Berberli, who held the rank of Kapetan of old Gradiska. Aga was young, talented and possessed of rare personal attractions, and donning the dress of a Dervish, he wrought his followers into a high pitch of religious enthusiasm, calling upon everyone to join his standard and offering the dazzling prospect of a triumphant march upon Stamboul to force the " Gyaur-Sultan " back to the true faith. Preaching thus, he collected his followers much as Peter the Hermit roused thousands for the retaking of the Holy City. Indeed, thousands flocked into Banjaluka, and it was with a great army that he set out from the gates with Stamboul for the promised goal.

It is hard to realise, when one watches the quiet streets to-day and the placid faces of the people, that vast concourse of men, filled with fanaticism, following Hüssein Aga, or *Zmai Bosanski*, " The Dragon of Bosnia," as he was called.

At Travnik (a place upon our route) Hüssein Aga, marching under the green flag, seized the Sultan's Vizier, Ali Pasha Moralja, and as that unfortunate individual was wearing a uniform of a semi-European cut, had the offending garments ripped off and the unlucky Vizier well scrubbed in water to take away the taint of such unbelieving influences as might linger upon his person. He was then ordered to say a few prescribed prayers by way of cleansing his soul, and finally thrust into a costume of genuine old Turkish style and hauled along in the wake of the new-born prophet, as a " horrible example."

At Sarájevo, the capital of Bosnia, similar incidents occurred. All the Sultan's officials were well scrubbed and dismissed from the country—at least those who were

lucky enough to escape death—and every sign of the new reforms was straightway abolished. Having made a very satisfactory sweep of all things pertaining to the new *régime*, Hüssein Aga and his followers settled down to a well-earned rest for the holy month of *Ramadan*, during which the captured ex-Vizier of Travnik, unable to appreciate his new-found happiness, managed to give Aga the slip, and get thence with much speed to Stolatz, whence, through the kindness of the Vizier, he escaped into Dalmatia. Hüssein Aga was now seized with a fresh fit of energy, and bethought himself that but a small portion of the journey to Stamboul had been accomplished. He called his followers together, and collecting over twenty thousand, marched to Kossovo-Polje, the place where in 1389 the Bosnians and Turks first crossed blades. Hearing of the revolt, quite twenty thousand Albanians, under the efficient leadership of Mustapha Pasha, joined him, and in a short time what is to-day Bulgaria fell before the joint attack.

How small a thing will change the fate of a country! A steel nut dropped into an engine will bring it to ruin; so the petty jealousy of Aga and Mustapha was fated to be the nut that fell into the great engine of revolt. With forty thousand trained fighters, no one can say what Aga might have accomplished; history was only repeating itself. As Stjepan Tvrtko deserted King Lazar at Kossovo, so, accepting the bribe of the governorship of Bosnia, Hüssein Aga consented to desert Mustapha Pasha. Undoubtedly Hüssein Aga must have lost much of his former fire, otherwise he would not have accepted the tempting bait.

Reshid Pasha, having got rid of Hüssein Aga, turned his attention to Mustapha Pasha and attacked the Albanians with his full force, destroying them completely after a terrific battle. Mustapha was forced to fly to Skutari, where three months later he was taken prisoner.

"ALI COGIA OF OLD BAGDAD." (BANJALUKA)

Hüssein Aga had meanwhile returned to Bosnia, only to find things there in a very bad way. The Krain district was filled by Austrian troops, the military frontier having been violated, while the most important governors and chiefs in Bosnia refused to acknowledge Aga's rule. This was the state of things when Reshid Pasha, who had just succeeded in finishing off the Albanian insurgents, was free to turn his whole force into Bosnia and settle scores with Hüssein Aga. Turkish armies crossed the frontier, and as fresh volunteers joined from the discontented towns, the Sublime Porte was in a position to make Hüssein Aga pay for the lively time he had treated them to.

Attacked upon three sides, Hüssein Aga, after a short defence, fled to Hungarian ground. At Esseg he, with a few followers, endeavoured to keep up a regal state. The call of the land of his birth, however, was too much for him, and he petitioned the Sultan to be allowed to end his days upon Moslem ground. The Sultan replied that Hüssein Aga might die upon Moslem ground, and appointed the distant province of Trapezunt as his place of banishment ; also, he should be deprived of all honours and titles which he had formerly held.

With bowed head Hüssein Aga accepted his hard fate, but ere he reached Trapezunt his heart broke and he died a lonely death. Even to-day the country folk love to sing upon the melancholy " gusla " of the sad fate of Hüssein Aga Berberli, who " for freedom and his ancestors " won for himself the proud title of " The Dragon of Bosnia."

We spent three days in Banjaluka. One would have been sufficient to see the town, but we loved the old-world charm, the Eastern scenes, and the time all too quickly vanished. What figures pass before the eye ! We see the Moslem life almost in its pure state : here are the tall black-robed figures of the priests, striding majestically

among the turbaned crowd; the veiled women, swathed in heavy draperies, taking a confined outlook upon the world outside through an opening not half an inch wide. We see the little Turkish children, dressed in wide flowing trousers, tight round the ankle, little red fezzes upon their heads, their hair often dyed a brilliant red, and their finger-nails stained with henna. Upon market days we see the *rayah*, the despised Christian peasant, with his load of market produce or his waggon of great green melons; he is dressed in barbaric splendour, white and red, black and blue, with heavy silver belt about his waist, and wears a large, red, twisted turban. This headgear is of most ancient origin. Upon some early scroll-work, proved to have been carved in the thirteenth century, these same turbans have been traced, proving that they were in existence before the Moslem invasion. The Christian women are intensely interesting, wearing white clothes with brightly coloured scarves and jackets, their hair, parted and plaited, interwoven with silver and copper coins, and interplaited with coarse horsehair, dyed blue; their styles are too numerous to describe.

The fascination of this scene never palls; one has only to stand in the shade of some mosque, and the hours flit by unnoticed as one watches the bewildering maze of strange types that pass like a pageant. Here and there are the figures of the Jews, bent, crafty-faced men in long coloured coats and turbans; they haggle with Turks and Christians alike. Intermingling with the crowd is the light blue and grey of Austria's soldiers, and the modern dress of their wives and daughters looks utterly out of place. Here are all the well-remembered types of old Bagdad: the water-seller with his quaint cry, the vendor of flat baked bread, the fruit merchant squatting cross-legged and almost hidden amidst a plethora of melons. Shouting and jostling one another,

ON MARKET DAYS WE SEE THE 'RAYAH,' THE DESPISED CHRISTIAN PEASANT, A GLITTERING MASS OF SILVER AND DAZZLING COLOUR. (BANJALUKA)

the very air is rent by a continuous melody of voices crying in strange tongues. At midday, if you pass the stately mosque, you will find a busy circle of the faithful gathered round a cool fountain in the shady court, splashing and performing their ablutions ere invoking Allah; upon the slender minaret, with its background of deep blue, you will see the solemn figure of the priest, his two hands to his mouth, giving forth the plaintive call to prayer; and we ask ourselves, was it but yesterday that we left Europe, or have we been transferred by some enchanted genii of old into another world, and how many cycles of ages have been swept away? It is strange, enchanting, almost overpowering, and we are half fearful that Mercédès will have been dissolved into thin air and that we shall be fated to spend the remainder of our lives in this world apart.

Each day we bathed in the cool Vrbas by the old Turkish walls, afterwards enjoying a delicious cup of coffee in the little café beneath the shadow of the great mosque. The hotel garden, especially at night, presented a scene of military life, the officers messing there; dinner, of course, save in Vienna, is unknown in Austria, and the substitute is decidedly lacking by comparison. However, there is much saluting and clicking of heels, very pleasant to the local ear.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the good that Austria has accomplished during the last thirty years. Wherever one looks one sees prosperity reflected from every face, while upon all sides are the unmistakable signs of a firm and just government. We have only to refer to M. Yriarte, who witnessed the following in 1876. "Un parti de Turcs," he says, "en vahissant le quartier chrétien, a pénétré jusque dans l'église serbe, et, amoncelant là des fagots et des branchages, a livré l'édifice aux flammes, à la grande terreur de tout le faubourg; les ruines sont encore fumantes. Les habitants, incapables

de se défendre, terrifiés et réduits d'ailleurs pour toute population à celle des serviteurs, n'ont pas même essayé de résister ; ils sont restés cachés," to realise the great change that has been effected ; peace and prosperity taking the place of intolerance and misrule.

We had been unable to procure any petrol since leaving Agram, but we reckoned on getting some at Jajce, fifty miles further on. If we could not obtain it there we should be stranded until some could be sent from Sarájevo by rail ; however, we hoped for the best. As we had only fifty miles to do, we did not leave until after ten o'clock. Mercédès, at the door, was surrounded by a motley crew. Assisted to our seats by the luggage porter, a gigantic figure in native dress, wearing a flaming red fez, we were ready to start. A toot on the horn and each dusky face was lighted up by the display of a strong set of gleaming teeth, which smiled an almost appalling good-bye, answered in a comparatively poor imitation by ourselves.

Speeding down the main street, we passed the graceful white-domed Ferhadia-Dshamia mosque, following the right bank of the Vrbas. This road, like the majority of roads in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was constructed by the Austrians (those past-masters in the art of road-making) since their occupation. Even the Romans refrained from attempting a like feat, contenting themselves by fashioning a road over the high bleak tableland of the Dobrinja Planina, an example followed by the Turks. Before this new road was finished travellers spoke of it as an insurmountable difficulty, and this tells volumes for the skill and pluck of the Austrian engineers. Following the example of their predecessors, who constructed the Stelvio, the Splügen, and other passes of the Alps, the present engineers have added to that reputation.

For the whole fifty miles the road has a steady rise

"STRANGE FIGURES THAT PASS BEFORE THE EYES LIKE A PAGEANT."
BANJALUKA. (BOSNIA)

of 5 per cent, never varying, and passes through scenery of the utmost grandeur.

Soon after leaving Banjaluka we passed through a small village; it was only a tiny place, perhaps forty low-roofed huts or so, the one and only road flanked by bazaars where the Orientals squatted cross-legged among their wares. We halted Mercédès while I descended to get a snapshot, and by the time I regained the car a large crowd had collected.

In towns such as Sarájevo, Mostar, etc., we Europeans are steadfastly ignored, no more notice being taken of us by the Moslems than were we the dogs that the Koran teaches them to believe. But, seated in Mercédès, the very novelty of the thing forced them to lay aside their usual impassiveness, to see the wonder from the world outside and the mad people it carried. Then, again, it is sometimes difficult to tell the true believer from the *rayah* (the Christian peasant), the Roman from the Orthodox. The dress is practically the same, though, of course, the Mahommedan women are heavily veiled, while the Christian women and girls only wear upon their heads a small red fez. They look very quaint in their great wide trousers, tight at the ankles. Save for the enveloping draperies, they might be mistaken for Mahommedan women. Really, the great likeness between the people is not to be wondered at. During those four centuries of Moslem rule the Christian endeavoured to efface himself as much as possible by copying his masters. It is doubtful if a more heroic struggle to preserve a faith ever took place than that of the unhappy Christians of Bosnia during Turkish rule. If the history of that dark time ever comes to be written, we shall feel proud of that sturdy race, who fought and died to preserve the teaching of the Cross during those terrible times. But I transgress.

The jolly motley throng gathered round Mercédès

were eyeing her with evident wonderment, timidly touching her shining panels here and there, while a delighted, if awestruck group were seriously discussing the apparent phenomenon of the exhaust. An aged peasant, a *rayah* of the old type, his brown face deeply marked by wrinkles, yet his eyes bright beneath a spotless turban, had been examining the talc windows at the back of the tonneau. Walking sedately along, he had come into the line of the exhaust, and the hot blast must have caught his legs just beneath the knee. Had a Turkish yataghan descended upon his back he could not have given voice to a more blood-curdling yell, and without exaggeration he leapt backwards nearly four feet. Peace was gradually restored, and an excited crowd gathered round the exhaust, ready at a moment's notice to seek safety in flight. Mercédès had convinced the faithful that Allah still held surprises in store for the unwary. I called to Sheila, who had been driving, to accelerate quickly, which she promptly did, and a cloud of blue spurted from the back. When the haze cleared I was the only person within twenty feet of Mercédès, and as the engine was just running I beckoned the crowd to come nearer. As though carrying their lives in their hands two or three of the boldest approached. I placed my hand over the exhaust and invited them to do the same. Two men, summoning up courage, did so, and held their brown hands against the hot air. I heard a word which sounded like "Zmai" which we afterwards discovered means "a dragon," the general opinion being that the strange monster we rode breathed out of the exhaust, and the quivering of the mudguards, etc., was its eagerness to be off.

The old man who had first discovered the existence of the exhaust had a few German words at his disposal, but I could not make him understand my explanations, so finally fell back upon the popular opinion of "the

dragon," adding that when Mercédès was roused to anger she spoke in a loud voice.

Mounting to my seat, we were ready to proceed. I leaned forward and opened the cut-out, and at that moment Sheila slipped in the "first" and opened the throttle. Several things happened at once; Mercédès bounded forward like a rocket, emitting an ear-splitting noise. A blue haze encircled us, and we caught a fleeting glimpse, out of the corner of our eyes, of the crowd tumbling over one another in their haste to get away from the anger of "the dragon," who spoke in so loud a voice. Thus we left them; from out of the Great Beyond we had come, and into the distance we vanished, leaving a memory behind us that will be talked about through many a winter's evening.

The road crosses the river, which here descends in a series of quick cataracts, and we were specially favoured by witnessing the shooting of the same by two young Turks upon a log raft. We saw them coming far up the stream and halted to watch them pass; the water boiled and foamed, dashing over the sunken rocks and rising in great waves, surging here and there in treacherous eddies by the smooth side of the massive stones.

The two white-robed men kept their feet with difficulty. Each had an oar, and they guided their craft, which came down at a fine speed, with wonderful skill. Suddenly one slipped and nearly fell overboard, the raft turning like a cork on the water; it was just opposite us when this happened, and we saw him scramble hastily to his feet, and with splendid nerve the two men managed to regain control of the frail craft, but not before they had had two narrow escapes from the jagged rocks which showed around them in every direction. Next moment they vanished round a bend in the river and passed out of our lives.

Continuing to follow the river, which soon assumes a more placid course, we met many family groups coming into Banjaluka to shop. They were principally mounted on mules, a perfect plethora of mules, who steadfastly refused to be persuaded to pass us until they had endeavoured to climb the rocky hill or descend into the waters of the Vrbas. The instant the animals commenced to shy the thickly veiled figures jumped to the ground and patiently awaited the time when their lord and master should have caught the refractory brute. Many times we stopped the engine, and even then the animals objected strongly, and it was always some little time before the swathed mummies were able to mount again.

Once more the road crosses to the right bank and the true wonders and beauties commence. Rounding a wide bend to the right, we enter the Gorge of the Vrbas, which cuts through the high tableland for forty miles. Though not so fine as the Gorge of the Narenta, which is one of the great valleys cutting through Herzegovina to the Adriatic, the Gorges of the Vrbas are magnificently grand. The high tableland called Dobrinja Planina rises like a huge barrier between Banjaluka and Jajce, and for twelve centuries the only road lay by climbing over the rocky desert. No one dared to use, or even thought of using, the Vrbas as a means of passage ; perhaps some adventurous soul has passed through the Gorges upon a raft, but as for constructing a road cut out of the solid rock, and by the swirling waters, it was deemed impossible. What Rome and the Sublime Porte failed to do Austria has accomplished ; the present road is a living monument. The Gorges, as I said before, are forty miles long and from seven hundred to one thousand feet deep. It is not unlike the Gorges di Gonda, or the Gorges du Tarn, in the Midi. Unlike the Narenta, whose mountains are rugged and bare, the perpendicular sides of the Vrbas are wooded almost to their summit, the

brown rocks jutting out here and there, their warm colour forming a beautiful contrast to the blanket of green.

As we entered the Gorges, Dorothy called our attention to a great crag which jutted far out from the hill-side, as though meditating the destruction of the road beneath. Upon it was perched one of the largest vultures I have ever seen in Europe. The curved beak and cruel head were clearly visible, sunken into a pair of massive bony shoulders, as it gazed stupidly down upon the green waters far beneath. A shout did not disturb it, and though it was out of range Ken took a shot at it with his revolver. This had a satisfactory result. Majestically it glided off its perch, and spreading its great wings, flapped its way quickly up into the sky until it was lost to view.

The valley narrows considerably until the road and the stream are wrestling together for very existence. The scenery is now particularly grand ; the water comes swirling in eddies and whirlpools, crashing against the rocks and washing in and out of great hollows almost under the road. It was here, while our minds were full of the beauties of the scene, that we experienced another taste of those troubles which were fated to follow us throughout our journey, and, as will be seen, almost to cause many a serious accident and favour us with some bad moments. I refer to the meeting and passing of horses and mules, a trouble far exceeding that in Denmark and Sweden, or even Southern Spain.[1] The first, I might almost say the prelude, occurred after we had penetrated perhaps ten miles into the Gorges. The valley was very narrow ; the mountain rose up sheer from the right-hand edge of the road into the very sky. Upon our left was a drop into the river of some thirty feet, where the road

[1] A week after our passage the Austrian Government instituted a service of public motor mail buses between Banjaluka and Jajce. I have since travelled this road and find that there is now no trouble whatever with the animals, petrol also being easily obtained.

is just wide enough for two vehicles to pass with careful driving. We met a party of six Austrian soldiers in fatigue dress, driving in a heavy clumsy waggon drawn by a pair of large and powerful young horses, who, upon perceiving Mercédès, threw their ears forward in a way we knew all too well and commenced to caper.

Profiting by similar episodes, we drove Mercédès to the precipice side of the road and stopped the engine. One " Tommy " jumped out and seized the near horse by the bridle, endeavouring to lead it past ; he was thus between the horses and the jagged wall of rock, and as we clearly foresaw the results of such a mad course, tried to explain in German. Taking no notice whatever, the soldier who was driving stood up in the cart and savagely lashed the horses about the head. Rearing and prancing in fright, the horses drew level with Mercédès' bonnet : then they plunged forward, at the same time shying violently into the great wall of rock, jamming the soldier between them. We saw the heavy waggon apparently smash right into him, with a grinding noise pierced by his shrill scream. Ken, Rodgers and I were out upon the road the next moment and witnessed a scene unique in my motoring experience. The driver still clung to the reins ; three of the soldiers had been flung to the floor of the waggon, while the sixth, he who had been sitting alongside the driver, had been thrown over the dash-board ; his feet had caught in something, and there he hung, head downwards, dangling between the horses' hoofs. While we watched, the hold of his legs gave way and he fell upon his face headlong between the now galloping horses. Instantly the front wheel passed over his back from his left armpit to his neck, but ere the back wheel could reach him he wriggled madly aside and avoided it, then lay inert upon the road. Instead of stopping, the driver continued to lash away at the horses, and Ken and I, our hearts sick with what

we had seen, rushed forward to render what assistance lay in our power and gather up the remains. The man whom we imagined ground to pulp against the rock recovered immediately and bolted down the road for his very life, and ere we could reach the man who had been run over, the huddled figure upon the dusty road gathered itself together and made tracks after his companions. Meanwhile the cart, urged on by the frantic driver, had disappeared round a corner, and a minute later the two soldiers reached the turn, the one who had been run over a trifle ahead, and, without even looking back, vanished for ever from our sight, leaving Ken, Rodgers and myself paralysed with astonishment.

Ken was the first to speak. "Well, I'm—dashed!" He recovered himself quickly as he remembered the ladies. "But I could swear that fellow was smashed against the rocks"—and we went across to examine the place.

A great mark, some two feet long, was scored out of the solid rock; the iron axle must have just missed the fellow's knees by a fraction, and his cry was of fright only. The other case was different; there was no doubt as to the man being run over, as both Rodgers and myself saw it clearly. The strangest part of the whole strange business is the fact that the soldiers in the cart did not stop to help their chums, but drove off like furies. As we had expected to find a couple of corpses, our relief at the happy ending was great and, still congratulating ourselves, we resumed our way.

The scenery is truly magnificent; only a narrow strip of sky is visible, and the beautifully wooded sides of the Gorges rise sheer up on either hand. Again, one noticed the utter absence of song-birds and missed the pure notes that one loves so much at home. It is a thousand pities that the folk of the country will never hear the sweetest sounds that Nature can produce. The Gorge winds

continuously to the right and to the left, each moment opening out fresh beauties to the enchanted eye. Now and again a few picturesque peasants appear between the trees and gaze down in wonderment at us, remaining in the same attitude until we disappear. Two carriages we met, and passed after some difficulty; we stopped the engine upon the precipice edge, and dismounted *en masse* to help if necessary, an example followed by the occupants of the carriages.

About two miles before the end of the Gorges is reached we come upon a place unequalled in its amazing effect. Here the river assumes the form of a semicircle and returning, passes within four hundred yards of itself, the narrow isthmus rising sheer up to the same level as the high tableland. The scenery is particularly fine; the mountains rising up from the swirling water leave not the slightest hold for any path to cling to. Looking at the immense walls of slippery rock and the eddying stream, one marvels at the pluck of the Austrian engineers.

With a stroke of genius, magnificent in its very conception, they turned sharp at right angles upon reaching this seeming impasse, and actually bored a semicircular tunnel through the very heart of the mountain. From either end of the tunnel the opposite opening is hidden by the curve, and two tiny flickering oil lamps only serve to make the darkness more intense.

Though well used to passing through long tunnels, it was nevertheless somewhat weird to leave the bright sunlight and rippling waters to enter into the rocky mouth of the mountain, vanishing instantly into a pitchy darkness. With a vivid recollection of the experience we had passed through, I sent Rodgers to the other end to stop any vehicle entering the tunnel, for the noise of Mercédès is intensified and resembles continuous thunder. Soon we rounded the curve and saw the end in view; darkness gave way to twilight, which quickly changed

into brilliant sunshine. The exit is particularly impressive.

Immediately upon leaving the tunnel mouth, and picking up Rodgers, we found ourselves upon a fine iron bridge, thrown across the stream. We had emerged from what looked like a rabbit-hole in the immense wall of sheer rock, and the next moment were speeding along upon the opposite side of the stream.

The Gorges continued for some two miles further and terminated in a long range of hills bordering on a fertile plain ; this was the end of the giant plateau stretching back to Banjaluka.

A dark streak in the hills bore witness to the wonderful passage ; a little later the dark streak had mingled with the deep purple of the range and it was hard to conceive that such a passage existed.

Nearing Jajce, we passed the small pilgrimage church of St. John, where, as Freeman relates, both Mussulman and Christian attend upon that saint's day to worship in the hope of having their disorders cured.

I met an Austrian officer upon our last tour who told me strange tales of this little church, where he was lucky enough to witness a special " throwing out of devils " that took place upon St. John's day some years ago. The chapel was filled to overflowing with Moslems and Christians, men and women, who rolled upon the ground gnashing their teeth, tearing their hair and rending their clothes. Two white-robed Christian priests walked amongst them, exhorting, preaching and praying, working the seething mass into a state of wild hysteria. Many went temporarily mad, and their murderous instincts had to be restrained, while women sat crushed in corners wailing dismally. When the excitement had reached its highest pitch, one of the priests produced a great crucifix, which he commanded all present to kiss irrespective of religion. It is incredible what a change

was wrought by this act : directly some half-mad fanatic had saluted the emblem he or she became at once quiet ; but one Moslem, a great-boned fellow, refused to allow the crucifix to approach his face. Four men seized the poor wretch, who was frothing at the mouth and whose eyes, blood-red, were staring out of his head, and held him, screaming and struggling, while the priest forced the crucifix to his lips. Strange to say, directly it touched him the man became quiet and was instantly released.

The officer said it was one of the most curious incidents he had ever witnessed, and that he felt rather glad when it was over, for the sight was not only revolting but at times positively uncanny.

CHAPTER III

THE JEWEL OF BOSNIA

JAJCE—ITS HEROIC HISTORY—ARRIVAL—THE BANJALUKA GATE—BAZAAR—FATHER OF TURBINES—THE FALLS—PANORAMA OF THE TOWN—RETURN TO HOTEL—CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM MENUS COMPARED—NIGHT.

WE were now fast approaching Jajce and were straining our eyes to be the first to see this wonderful place, on which the eyes of Christendom were at one time turned as the last hope against the Turk: Jajce, the jewel of Bosnia, and the last Christian rock to be submerged by the great wave of infidelism.

In the short summary of the history of Bosnia I told how the Bosnian monarchy came to a tragic end when Jajce fell in 1463, Stjepan Tomascević, as will be remembered, the last king of Bosnia, being captured here by Muhammed II, who promptly flayed him alive, as was the pleasing custom of those times. Ashboth gives a very interesting description of the further history of the fortress-town.

Muhammed II, in his triumphal conquest, captured over seventy towns in a few weeks, setting the crown of victories by the taking of Jajce. It only required the news of the downfall of Jajce to rouse King Mathias into fiery energy, and he promptly set out in the autumn to avenge the Christian arms. Directly he crossed the

frontier hundreds of Bosnian noblemen, thirsting to revenge their defeat, flocked to his standard ; and with a fickle wave of her hand Fate reversed the scales of fortune. Town after town was recaptured, and in December of the same year Mathias had seventy-five fortresses to his credit. Muhammed, with the south in his power, commenced to put into force his immense resources ; in 1464 he besieged Jajce with 30,000 men. His demands for surrender were useless, for the defenders, under Emerich Zápolya, a stout fighter, felt themselves to be the defenders of Christendom. Mathias, hearing of the trouble, lost no time and, with characteristic promptness, hurried to the rescue. Muhammed, fearful of being caught between two fires, appears to have been struck with panic and, sinking his cannon in the Vrbas, retreated with undue haste. This decided Mathias, and he commenced to organise an army for the reconquest of the provinces. Jajce was henceforth the capital of a new Bosnian kingdom, and it was under her walls that the sixty-four years' struggle between Hungary and Turkey took place, the first round between the Cross and the Crescent, the prize being far greater than the beautiful land of Bosnia. Hungarian armies meanwhile had been successful in Servia ; in fact, so general was their success that the Sultan even dispatched ambassadors to Hungary to sue for peace.

Mathias, strong in his hatred, refused to treat, and set about collecting a great army for the ultimate overthrow of the Turk. It is more than possible that had he had his wish he might have altered the whole fate of Bosnia ; but the Pope, swayed by petty jealousy, seized the opportunity to compel him to utilise his great force against the Hussite king, Podjebrad of Bohemia. Nothing proves the splendid character of Mathias more than the fact that in 1473, although he had resumed his quarrel with the Emperor Frederike III, Muhammed offered to

deliver up the whole of Bosnia if Mathias would grant a Turkish army free passage into Germany through Hungarian lands. To his everlasting credit, Mathias refused the offer with scorn and turned the Moslem wrath upon his own shoulders. The Sultan now attempted the capture of Jajce in deadly earnest, and he and Bajazid led successive armies against the town. But the garrison successfully defended the fortress and defied the Turk, knowing that so long as Jajce remained in Christian hands the Moslem dare not advance into Hungary, as his rear could be so effectively threatened.

After the death of Mathias, Muhammed renewed his attacks upon Jajce with even greater vigour than before, and thus Jajce stood as the stumbling-block that prevented the Crescent sweeping northward. Its position as the bulwark of Christendom was realised so keenly upon every hand that the Pope himself, dropping all personal feeling (a trifle too late), appealed to the Christian Powers of the world for help to aid it to hold out.

Venice, the great power of the Adriatic, collected large sums for its defence. In 1500 the Sultan Bajazid himself led a great army against Jajce. John Corvinus, the hero son of his hero father Mathias, using every exertion, made a dead heat with the Turkish army and arrived at Jajce simultaneously, giving battle under the walls of the time-honoured fortress. With relentless fervour the Christians fell upon the Moslems, driving them in utter rout into the Vrbas, wherein thousands perished miserably.

Twenty years later Jajce still remained a thorn in the side of Turkey, and another combined attempt was made for its capture. The Sandjak-Begs of Bosnia and Servia planned a great expedition for that very object. Realising that Jajce, as it now stood, was practically proof against capture, the wily followers of Allah rightly considered that if the surrounding country were in their

hands, including every fort and town, Jajce must fall at last. With this secret object in view a great campaign was started. Whether or not the Christians were lulled into false security will never be known, suffice it to say that the two most important places, Zvornik and Teshanj, fell into Moslem hands. The former, " the stronghold of the Drina," as it is called, was taken through the carelessness of Thomas of Mathusna, its governor, who had neglected to properly provision it. Teshanj, which is the key of the Usora, made a better show and fell fighting. Jajce was now completely cut off from the north and, in fact, from any help, a small but determined Christian island in an ocean of Moslemism. Few towns in such a terrible position could have done as Jajce did, and under Peter Keglevich, a veteran fighter, the last defence of this Magyar Troy is a tale written in golden letters and worthy to take its place in history as a monument of brilliant heroism. Ashboth and Evans both quote a legend telling how, when the Turks had sat round the walls, after vainly trying by every means in their power to reduce the place to surrender, they, to the great joy of the besieged, apparently prepared to relinquish their hopeless task.

By some means or other Peter Keglevich obtained knowledge that this was only a *ruse de guerre* to lull the town into false security, and, like the cunning old soldier he was, he prepared a hot dish to be served to the Moslem, dispatching a portion of his troops by night with orders to circumvent the Turkish army, and hide in the woods in their rear, while he double-guarded the walls.

It so happened that a certain festival was due, when it was the custom for the women and girls to dance before the gates of the town in honour of the occasion. Wily old Peter K. commanded them to do so now, and they fearlessly obeyed. Upon that night the Turks had arranged for the final assault upon the town; creeping back with

scaling ladders, they were astonished to hear singing and merry-making, and soon perceived the dancing women before the open gates. This was too much for the Turk ; with cries of exultation they threw down their ladders and rushed *en masse* for the open gates. In another instant the scene had changed. A cannon boomed, the prearranged signal to the troops in the rear of the Turks, who with cries of rage fell upon the Moslem ; producing swords and knives, the women joined in the fray, and from scores of places warriors poured out eager for the fight. The slaughter was enormous, so the legend ends, the Turks being annihilated even to the last man.

With dogged perseverance the Moslem returned to the attack, and the Pasha dispatched another army of 20,000 troops, which besieged Jajce for one year and a half. But Peter K. was as ready for the second army as for the first, and kept them at bay until, in 1525, a Hungarian army raised the long siege. But the end was in sight. If Hungary was doomed, how could Jajce hope to survive ? In 1526 Hungary fell at Mohacs, on August 6th, and during the lamentable quarrel between John of Zápolya and Frederic of Hapsburg, brave old Peter K. transferred the town he had held and defended so nobly to the latter monarch, who promptly put it into the keeping of two German captains. The glorious history of Jajce comes to a sad end two short years later. The Sandjak-Begs of Bosnia and the Pasha of Servia appeared with a large army before the gates and appealed, as they had done so often before, for surrender. There was no stout old Peter K. or John Corvinus, no watchful Mathias, no faithful Emerick Zápolya to oppose the Turks, and—shades of the past heroes !—Jajce, the impregnable, surrendered after only ten days' siege. With the fall of Jajce, then, fell the hope of Christendom. The Moslem now had nothing to stop his march northwards and the whole Christian world mourned in unison.

With this wonderful history in our minds, it was not strange that we looked eagerly forward for the first glimpse of Jajce.

The road follows a large open valley and, rounding a corner, comes into view of Jajce; this view we afterwards discovered is the poorest and does not do justice to the massive walls of the castle. We entered Jajce by the Banjaluka gate, a massive old edifice formed by the time-honoured walls. I remember that our first feeling was one of astonishment as we passed through this gate last year, astonishment at the diminutive size of the place; we had expected to find the traces at least of an immense citadel, instead of which we found an Oriental village built upon the summit of a cone-shaped hill, whose little wooden houses seemed to be holding one another up; and it was hard to realise that we were in the Jajce that had given Europe half a century's respite against the conquest of the Crescent.

Slowly we made our way down the narrow street, bordered on either side by quaint, overflowing bazaars and peopled by grave-faced Orientals. Indeed, the narrow street was a blaze of colour. The Austrian Government, endeavouring to foster commerce, has erected a hotel at Jajce, and thither we were bodily carried by an excited chattering crowd, who encircled us like wasps swarming round a pot of honey. The proprietor, a fat old man, proud of his European dress (a great novelty), welcomed us and promptly handed us over to the care of a buxom woman in gorgeous raiment, cut in the peasant style, who conducted us to our rooms. Of course such a thing as a garage was unheard of; not even was there a closed shed or yard, and Mercédès must stand in the open space before the hotel door. Soon a few Austrian police and soldiers were busily endeavouring to disperse the crowd, feeling themselves sharing the glory radiated by Mercédès.

After an early cup of tea we sauntered out to gain a hurried glimpse of the place ere night fell. Continuing along the one and only street, we passed out of the Travnik gate. The road lies beside the green waters of the Pliva, which pour down from the beautiful lake of Jacero in many miles of fairy cascades. We crossed the stream by a broad wooden bridge; on either side are a number of frail-looking little corn-mills turned by the green waters. The ordinary water-wheel is replaced by what must be the father of turbines. It is strange to find in this out-of-the-world spot the idea the development of which was destined to form a new era in the world's progress. A screw, or rather a wooden propeller, is fixed at one end of a long pole, set vertically, and the top end is attached to a circular grindstone in the interior of the mill. Two frail bearings support the wooden shaft, and rocks are arranged in such a manner that the water collects behind them and pours over in the form of a miniature cascade straight down upon the wooden fan. The mill stands upon numerous wooden piles driven into the bed of the river, and around them swirls a seething mass of white foam. Wind and water, those two great forces, working together, as is their wont, for destruction, have rotted the poles almost through till the frail building seems to keep its place above the waters by a sheer miracle. We were permitted to enter and inspect one of the rickety buildings; the interior is long, narrow and very dark; on the right is a row of perhaps a dozen corn-mills all noisily at work, and the little structure rocks again with their vibration; the wooden shaft revolves in a tight-fitting hole through a large flat stone and is fixed into the centre of a circular flat stone resting upon the first. The raw corn is in a large box fixed to the wall above the grinding-stone, down to which it is led in a continuous stream, entering by a hole in the centre and emerging in the form of flour and falling into a box

set to catch it. Two swarthy Turks, attired in baggy white trousers and fragments of shirt, and wearing red fezzes, attended to the requirements of the mill. The noise was incessant, the grind of the corn and the creak, creak of the whole crazy concern mingled with the ceaseless roar of the waters.

At the other end of the bridge we turned to the left, following the descending stream; on our right rises a low conical-shaped hill, completely covered with Moslem tombs and graves. One small well-walled-in walk permits the unbeliever to pass over the hill, and it is quaint to watch the numberless turbaned figures squatting cross-legged among the tombs, gravely meditating and muttering prayers. Occasionally a head is bowed and a forehead pressed against the ground; otherwise the figures are as immovable as though carved in stone.

This Moslem love of living amidst the graves of their honoured dead, of having their towns and villages surrounded by innumerable gravestones, has been a source of no little embarrassment to Austria, checking, as it threatened, especially in the case of Sarájevo, the expansion of the town.

The spot where the Pliva joins the Vrbas is one of the greatest attractions of Jajce, or I should rather say the spot where the Pliva leaps into the arms of the Vrbas from a height of ninety feet. Descending in a series of fairy-like cascades from the beautiful lake of Jacero, the Pliva, reaching the precipice, falls in one gigantic wave into the waters of the Vrbas, which here pass through a deep and rocky gorge. To cross the Vrbas, which we must do to obtain the finest view, one has to descend steps cut in the rock almost along the side of the falls. Now and then a gust of wind, carrying with it the scented spray, is wafted gently against our faces. At one spot, about half-way down, is an iron platform, from which a good, though too near, view of the falls is

obtained. One of the most interesting sights to my eyes was a single turbine mill, very small, yet hanging gamely on to a piece of projecting rock which, by a strange freak of nature, diverts a tiny stream, just sufficient to turn the fan merrily. It is ludicrous to watch the futile efforts of the main fall to reach the defying little mill and sweep it from its precarious perch down to destruction. Continuing the descent we noticed that the rocky cliff looks almost like a gigantic petrified sponge, not unlike the fossilised grass from the waterfalls at Tivoli. Here and there smooth boulders are embedded, but there is no hurrying throng of tourists to scribble their names upon the virgin surface ; indeed, the whole land seems to have been forgotten by hurrying Europe altogether.

Reaching the water's side, now smooth and swift, as it hurried onward to the north, we crossed and ascended to the summit of the opposite bank of the Gorge. Thick foliage prevents the visitor obtaining a first warning of the surprise in store, until he reaches a point exactly opposite the summit of the falls. Then, and not till then, does the incomparable view open out before his eyes. Upon the summit of a conical hill clusters Jajce, every foot of ground covered deep by the old-world town, swelling gradually from a broad base and terminating in the war-honoured walls of the stronghold that carved so deep a name upon history. Time and the Turks have dealt very leniently with Jajce, and it remains to-day exactly as it was in the height of its fame, four hundred years ago. Around and beneath the castle are the wooden houses of the Turks, for we know that the proud Moslems of Jajce never allowed an unbeliever to dwell inside their walls.

The Christian town still stands upon the further bank of the Vrbas, and the Jajce we now gaze at is identically as it was when the green flag of the Sultan waved proudly

over the castle walls. The crowd of wooden dwellings is broken here and there by tiny little mosques, whose slender minarets form a striking contrast to the Italian Campanile of St. Luke.

The falls of the Pliva seem to burst forth from the foundations of the town and roar with continuous thunder over the precipice edge. Clouds of spray rise up from the surface of the Vrbas and, catching the sunbeams, are shot with myriads of beautiful colours, sometimes taking the form of a rainbow stretching unbroken; again they are separated, each endeavouring to eclipse the other. The beautiful greens of the trees and grass, the bare rock heated to molten colour by the dying sun, the white and brown Moslem town crowned by the ancient fortress, added to the rich purple of the distant mountains, all combined with the glamour of the East to form a scene we should carry away far back in our minds as one remembers a perfect dream or the face of some loved one. We were carried away by the enchantment of the spot, and remained motionless drinking it greedily in, while the glowing sun sank behind us and the purple mountains slowly turned to steel.

Night was fast closing in; amidst the cluster of houses twinkled the innumerable lights from each minaret; the musical call to prayer mingled dreamily with the sound of the waters. Not until there remained visible only a conical mass slightly darker than the dense background, the bracelets of lamps upon the minarets looking like the reflection of the stars that filled the great arc of heaven, did we stir and, as though rousing ourselves from a dream, we slowly groped our way back to the town. The *muezzin* was over, the dark figures had long since disappeared from the frail galleries and the air seemed heavy with sleep.

As we passed through the bazaar earlier in the evening we noticed several butchers' shops, their owners squatting

cross-legged upon the floor according to custom, conversing gravely with their customers. The floor of all the Moslem shops, as I stated before, is really the sixth side of a large box and is raised some eighteen inches above the level of the road. It is always scrupulously clean and often covered with valuable rugs. The proprietor leaves his shoes in the roadway and encloses his feet in gorgeous slippers; his customers do likewise, though sometimes their walking shoes, which are of very heavy leather turned up at the toe, are large enough to admit the fancy shoes as well. If they require but a small bargain they can be served as they stand in the roadway, but should their requirements necessitate their entering a shop, or if they wish to pass a few remarks with the turbaned proprietor, they kick off their heavy shoes and squat down upon the carpeted floor among the wares. A boy is at once dispatched to a neighbouring café and soon returns bearing a battered copper tray and the coffee in quaint cups to the exact number. Cigarettes are then produced and smoked in long wooden holders, two feet or more in length. First comes the customary greeting of two Moslems, the touching of the breast, mouth and forehead, from which the Catholic sign of the cross is said to have originated.

But *revenons à nos moutons* in a fitting sense. I was speaking of the butchers' shops, and upon the floor we had noticed some very tender-looking lamb displayed and congratulated ourselves upon the prospect of something good for dinner. The Moslem butcher always serves the meat cooked according to taste, and it is exhibited upon steaming trays and eaten before it can cool. Of course no Moslem would touch pork or veal, for what says the Koran, "Ye are forbidden to eat that which has died itself . . . or swine's flesh," and in this climate, which seems to be one endless succession of hot, glorious days, it is a wise precaution.

The dining-room of the hotel was almost empty as we took our places.

"It's *à la carte* only," I said, as a menu was handed to me. "But I see nothing but veal and pork marked here. Have you no beef?" I questioned, in an aggrieved tone. Had I asked the waiter to seize, trim and cook a small child upon the spot, he could not have regarded me with more horror.

"You ask—you ask for what?" he faltered.

"A mutton chop, steak, shoulder, leg, lamb, ribs or sweetbread," Ken interrupted, his deep voice swelling forth the German equivalents like a miniature cannonade.

I am still doubtful whether that speech did not cost us the respect instilled by Mercédès. To say the waiter was shocked would be to describe his feelings too mildly; he was distressed to his very marrow, and for a moment could only gasp faintly. With a noble effort he recovered himself, and swallowing the lump in his throat managed to ejaculate, "Did the Herr ask for beef or mutton?"

"The Herr is in a fit state to devour either, or both," Ken took up. "Why not?"

"But the Herren and the Frauen must not touch beef or mutton," the waiter broke in, horror depicted upon every line of his face. "Only the Moslems, the people of no degree, eat such dirt; but pork or veal is eaten by those of quality," and he leant against the table to recover from the shock.

Simultaneously we burst out laughing. Sheila and Dorothy had been observing Ken's hungry glances till they could bear it no longer; the absurdity of the thing had struck us all, the tender young lamb only fit for dogs, according to the waiter; the greasy chunks of veal and pork set before the other guests alone fit for the upper ten!

"Perhaps," Sheila wisely interrupted, "a chicken might be permitted, or some fish from the river."

A chicken was out of the question, having to be killed, plucked and cooked. Fish reminded me that the lake of Jacero lay near by and that its clear waters are famed for trout and a delicate species of crayfish. The proprietor professed his ability to procure both these dainties, and half an hour later we sat down to a repast consisting of soup, delicious trout, steaming crayfish and a kind of sloppy pudding of unknown composition. We dined royally, and indeed almost throughout the present tour the inns and hotels we stayed at were princely, both in appearance and cleanliness, compared with portions of Southern Spain, or even some small villages in the least-known districts of Italy.

One thing we enjoyed (which during our Swedish tour we missed terribly), and that was baths in the hotels. Even sitz-baths are unknown in the Scandinavian empire, and are luxuries that a kind future may eventually bestow and a kinder Providence teach the people to appreciate.

We had another round with our friend the waiter when the dinner was ready, the subject this time being bread. His explanation was that the bread we had for tea, delicious little round cobs of Viennese baking, could only be obtained in the morning, and if requested a quantity could be saved for dinner. "You did not request this," added the waiter, his lips quivering with self-righteousness on being so unjustly misunderstood.

Our rooms looked over the deep valley of the Vrbas, flowing on its way into the deep gorges towards Banjaluka and the north. Across the dark valley twinkled the lights of the Christian village, themselves a tragic reminder of the centuries of Moslem oppression when the *rajah*, the unbelieving dog, was compelled to live upon the further bank, so as not to pollute the faithful town of Jajce with his presence.

The sky is dotted with innumerable stars, the Great

Bear is down upon the horizon and from out of the perfect night, mingling with the sweet smell of the foliage, comes the deep rumble of the falls.

Sheila and I leant upon the wooden balcony before the open windows of our room, hardly murmuring a word, each so engrossed in thought that it seemed almost a sacrilege to break the magic silence. Our hands were clasped together, and as we leaned forward our shoulders touched, seeming to convey more than a thousand words could have done.

"Do you remember those evenings at Granada?" Sheila said at last, bringing herself back to consciousness with an effort. "The Alhambra by moonlight and the pure snows of the Sierra Nevada?"

I was about to reply when Sheila's hand tightened upon mine; her sharp ears had caught the sound of the priests upon the light-encircled minarets.

"La Allah—'il Allah—Mahommed rasul Allah," came the plaintive cries in weird tones, blending together in the final "ALLAH Hu" and dying a lingering death in the music of the falls.

Without a word we turned into the brilliantly lighted room and closed the shutters upon the perfect night.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAND OF THE CEDAR AND VINE

VISITING THE SIGHTS—THE OLD CASTLE—CATACOMBS—BODY OF TOMASCEVIĆ—EXCURSION TO JACERO—BEAUTY OF THE LAKE—TEA IN STRANGE COMPANY—FAREWELL TO JAJCE—VAKUF—LAST OF THE VRBAS—TRAVNIK—ITS HISTORY—MOUNTAIN PASS—FIRST VIEW OF SARÁJEVO—MODERN STREETS—ARRIVAL AT HOTEL—RODGERS' NIGHT SURPRISES.

I HAVE grown out of it now, but upon our first tour I used to be rather anxious to know how Mercédès would fare if left exposed all night and open to the inspection of any evil-minded person.

The proprietor had allayed our anxiety by declaring that Bonga would spend the night upon a chair by Mercédès' side. Bonga proved to be a gigantic mongrel hound, who, when given his orders by the proprietor, bounded joyously to Mercédès and curled himself upon the chair set for him. We had an excellent sample of Bonga's reputation earlier in the day when, upon finding Mercédès the centre of a noisy throng of picturesque children, the proprietor informed the group in a loud voice that Bonga might arrive during the next few seconds. In much less time than it takes to tell Mercédès stood in dignified silence, and we felt satisfied to leave her in the care of the redoubtable Bonga.

A rather laughable incident, and at the same time one

which might have ended seriously, occurred next morning when Rodgers emerged before breakfast to polish up Mercédès. He had completely forgotten Bonga, who, at that moment, was taking a satisfied stroll of inspection upon the further side of the car and arrived at the end of the bonnet precisely as Rodgers reached the tonneau. What happened next Rodgers has not the faintest recollection of, while Bonga maintains discreet silence. Suffice it to say that Rodgers, by a great effort, managed to reach the hotel door a trifle ahead. When next he emerged it was in the company of the proprietor, who effected a friendly introduction, though during our short stay Bonga eyed Rodgers with evident disapproval.

We were anxious to revisit the sights of Jajce, the wonderful old fortress, the Catacombs, and the Campanile of St. Luke, etc. The Austrian Government here watches over the stranger like a father: tickets are issued to those desiring to see the sights, and a guide is also supplied by that faithful country. The present guide proved to be quite a modern figure, clad in homespun tweeds, and he wore these ready-made clothes with evident pride, as though conscious of a delightful sense of complete civilisation, which shed a radiance around and which, by the way, compared quite unfavourably with the common dress of the people. A turban sits with dignity upon a dusky brow, where a cheap cloth cap, set at a rakish angle, looks positively ghastly; while with a long plush coat or a brilliantly embroidered sleeveless vest over a shirt of dazzling whiteness, an old tweed jacket with crumpled collar and a frayed tie suffer horribly in comparison. A pair of exceedingly baggy trousers, many inches too long, and turned up at the bottom innumerable times, are really too ludicrous when placed alongside the neat, baggy, blue trousers, tight from the knee downwards and ending quaintly in pointed shoes of coloured leather. A large brass watch-chain is a poor

substitute for the heavy leather belts of the people, from which usually protrude the handles of at least two knives. However, our modern friend soon proved himself an expert at his profession, and we commenced to enjoy ourselves in real earnest.

"Where would you like to go first?" the guide asked in German, anxious to please.

"To the castle," Dorothy ejaculated, before anyone could reply. "To the heroic old walls that defied the Turks for seventy years," she added, her eyes sparkling in anticipation; and the castle it was.

Leaving the road, our guide leads us up a very narrow and steep path between the low-roofed wooden Turkish houses, passing round innumerable sharp turns and along a perfect maze of windings, gradually ascending the conical hill. Here we can see the Moslem life to perfection, among these, the homes of the faithful. Here and there are small open spaces wherein a tiny fountain splashes and around which play numerous children—quaint little figures in Eastern dress, the girls in baggy trousers tight at the ankles and reaching up under the arm-pits, their hair neatly plaited. The foot-gear is very curious, consisting of a smooth piece of wood the size of the sole of the foot, this resting upon two square lumps of wood; across one end is a leather strap through which the big toe is thrust. Wonderful as it seems, the little ones can run and jump, and kicking off the shoes would splash their feet in the running waters with shouts of joy. It is astounding what a love of washing is displayed by the Moslem. Mahommed was indeed directed by Allah when he commanded the faithful to wash before prayer: "O true believers, when ye prepare yourselves to pray, wash your faces, and your hands unto the elbow; also rub your faces and your feet." As he also commanded them to pray five times each day,[1] this duty becomes a

[1] At dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and night.

confirmed habit and they early display almost a cat-like love of outward cleanliness, setting an example that many nations, fondly believing themselves in a very different state of civilisation, might do well to follow.

Usually the children scatter at our approach, but now and then a few of the bolder spirits linger to watch us pass.

We now leave the clustering houses and reach more open ground, gradually climbing towards the massive walls which tower above our heads. For some inexplicable reason the Turks refrained from using it as a modern stronghold ; at the same time they were jealous of any alterations and did all in their power to preserve its character. One can mark the deep scars in the walls, the massive proportions of the gateway, the giant outline of the famous bear-tower. It is impossible to approach the old building without some emotion at the memories it conjures up, of the heroic hands that held the Christian flag aloft and the brave hearts that defied the Moslem for all those stormy years. From the outside one can hardly find a flaw in the defences, and it is not until one enters the now ruined courtyard, by means of a narrow doorway, that one realises the centuries that have passed since the stronghold fell for the last time into the hands of the Turks. The interior forms an irregular square, surrounded by bastions, with high battlements, along which it is possible to walk. The view, looking down from the old walls, is very beautiful : to the west the Pliva descends from the lake of Jacero in a series of sparkling cataracts ; to the north stretches a long range of jagged rocks ; and to the south, beneath a broiling sun, lies a fertile plain well wooded and broken here and there by tumbling ruins and small villages composed of wooden houses. But across the Pliva, close to where we stand, rises the dome-shaped hill we passed on our way to the waterfalls, covered deep with Moslem

tombs, among which we could see the mournful figures of the Turks. It was upon the summit of this sugar-loaf hill that, so the old legend relates, there stood the summer palace of the old kings of Bosnia, of which not a single trace is now left. From the massive battlements two great walls lead down, one to the Pliva, the other to the Vrbas ; the space thus bounded forms the old town, the walls broken only by the Banjaluka and Travnik gates.

A marble monument is erected at one corner of the interior, surmounted by a large gilded eagle, and, as the guide proudly pointed out, is erected to the memory of the twenty-eight Christian strangers who were butchered in cold blood in 1878 when news arrived that Austrian troops were about to march into Bosnia. The newly severed heads of these unfortunates were used to decorate the Banjaluka gate, being placed upon iron spikes. Many of the white-haired Moslems, praying yonder among the tombs, must remember the ghastly scene that the gate presented only thirty years ago.

Pointing towards the lake of Jacero, our guide showed us a white obelisk far away, almost hidden among the green of a small hill-side, a simple and eloquent memorial to the Austrian soldiers who fell in that last insurrection, for here was fought the decisive battle between the fanatical natives and the Army of Occupation. From among the cluster of houses at our feet rises the Italian Campanile of St. Luke, a beautiful but battered remnant, and the only large Christian emblem to escape total destruction, forming a clear link with the days of the Bosnian monarchy.

The catacombs, though small, merit a visit, and are situated some little distance down the south-western side of the castle hill.

In these catacombs is a mausoleum erected to himself by Hrvoje, Lord of Jajce and Duke of Spalato, Chief

Lieutenant under King Ladislaus of Naples, the " Warwick " of Bosnia, the " King-maker " of the age previous to the Moslem conquest ; recognised by Ragusa, Hungary and indeed all the adjoining powers, as the real ruler of Bosnia—a large, heavy, bull-voiced man, fierce in war and play—he died, leaving to his descendants a great inheritance and a memory that time has but softened, not effaced.

The entrance to the catacombs is through a raised stone doorway, which our guide opened with a key of iron quite ten inches long. He lit a pair of torches, and descending some stone steps we are in a kind of anteroom ; at right angles a door leads into the catacombs proper, and after stumbling down another short flight of steps similar to the first we find ourselves in a large rocky vault. For a moment or so we remain motionless until our eyes accustom themselves to the change from the dazzling sunlight outside. Gradually we see we are in a kind of combined early Christian chapel and medieval torture chamber. At the farther end stands a rough altar hewn, like the whole place, out of the living rock ; here and there are long narrow niches in the walls of graves not unlike those in the Catacombs outside Rome ; against the rock stand altar-shaped stones, and cut in the wall are several stone ledges about two feet above the floor. These were used for criminals, and our guide detailed with much gusto how a prisoner's hand used to be thrust through a small circular hole in the rock just beside the seat and a heavy object fastened to it ; he then points to the vaulted roof and again to the seat, and we hear a loud splash and perceive that there is a cup-like hole in the seat filled with water. This is the torture of " death by water," which falls in slow regular drops—drip, drip—on to the prisoner's head, soon driving the poor wretch into merciful insanity. Listening to the excited whisperings of our guide, we were able to appreciate his

remarks, especially as he extinguished the torches at the critical moment, and we listened in darkness to the slow splash—drip—splash of water on to stone. A large hole in the centre of the floor leads downwards by means of another rotten stair—into a similar vault; a large stone altar stands at the farther end. In the solid stone slab which forms the top of the altar is cut a cross, to the left a half-moon and to the right a full sun. Ashboth calls this " the Queen's tomb," and relates how the whole is carved out of natural rock with the greatest and most wonderful patience, and, so the miracle relates, neither wood, iron, nor foreign pieces of stone being used.

One can walk into the intense darkness behind the altar and see its massive shape silhouetted against the light of the flickering torches, and the light comes through the half-moon and the full sun. Our voices are deadened by the low rocky roof, and the ceaseless splash of the water combines with the heavy air to render our return into the sunshine all the more welcome.

There is yet another glory to visit, and our guide occupied nearly ten minutes in introducing this final wonder—the mummied body of the last unhappy king of Bosnia, King Tomascević, who, it will be remembered, was flayed alive here by Muhammed II in 1463, but it was only twenty years ago that the body was discovered, and it now lies in a glass case upon an altar in the Franciscan church. The spectacle is hardly pleasing, though undoubtedly it is of historical interest to look upon the actual remains of the last member of the ill-fated Bosniac dynasty. Unhappy Tomascević, patricide, submissive to Rome, hated by his Bogomile subjects, betrayed by the one, deserted by the other, now takes his place in the long list of martyrs who have perished in defence of the faith.

After leaving the Franciscan church we dismissed our guide to spend the half-hour before lunch in wandering

slowly back to our hotel. At the Banjaluka gate we paused to look with renewed interest at the few remaining iron spikes, bent and rusted, and to think of the ghastly burdens they carried thirty years ago. One cannot help contrasting the apparent benefits that Austrian rule has conferred upon this land ; as one gazes upon the different races that she is endeavouring to blend together under the name of Bosnians, one wonders if it is possible for human hands to accomplish such a task.

We are now bordering upon the north and south of Bosnia, where the two bitterest creeds on earth commence to mingle together. I refer to the Roman and the Orthodox Churches. Will one ever acknowledge allegiance to the other? is the question being now asked silently by many an anxious minister.

A delightful quarter of an hour can be whiled away by drinking coffee and watching the constant stream of traffic pass beneath that Banjaluka gate. Upon the next table to us two grave-faced Turks squatted, entirely disdaining the use of chairs, and resting their backs against the whitewashed wall, nodding their heads wisely together, drinking coffee and exchanging cigarettes. Among the busy throng passing before us the faithful jostle shoulders with the despised *rayah*, who, in the centre of Moslem rule, has fashioned himself into a very true image of the Oriental. Turkish women heavily muffled, flit like evil spirits across the scene. Christian maidens, in their baggy trousers and tight bodices, carrying water or baskets of freshly plucked grapes upon their shapely heads, pass by in unrestrained freedom, to the envy of their closely watched and muffled Moslem sisters. The common peasants of the district invariably wear the rough red turban, a heavy coat of sheep-skin, white baggy trousers, and a white shirt open at the neck. A particularly heavy belt is worn round the waist, which, while containing a few knives, serves more as a receptacle

for any loose object, flat loaves of bread, fruit, in fact, anything for which room can be found. The arms are usually bare and, in the case of women, covered with the tattooed emblems of religious devices.

This custom of tattooing, so general in Bosnia, is said by Dr. Gluck to have originated at the time of the Turkish invasion. The conquerors forced so many of the Christian peasants to embrace Islam that the Christian priests had their flocks well tattooed in order that even as converts they bore the emblem of the cross, while in many cases this happy idea prevented their conversion.

So industrious are these peasants that when compelled to stand idle, say when looking after flocks or finding a half-hour unoccupied, they produce an ingenious device for spinning flax. It consists of a short stick some ten inches long, held in the left hand; to this one end of the flax is attached, the supply being held in the other hand. A quick twist with the fingers of the left hand revolves the stick at surprising speed, and the rotary motion soon converts the flax into thread, which is collected round the stick; when not in use the whole contrivance goes into the belt, while many men carry their supply of flax inside their shirt.

Now and then a Mahommedan priest passes in spotless white turban and long dark blue coat reaching to the ground; his beard is crisp and well trimmed, and he walks with a stately swing. He is greeted respectfully by the faithful, the breast, mouth and forehead are touched, and in response they are blessed with a musical sentence.

We were surprised upon looking at our watches to find that it was nearly two o'clock, and we hurriedly made our way back to the hotel. We had planned a short excursion in Mercédès after lunch to the head of the beautiful lake of Jacero. Some excellent trout, fresh

from the lake, awaited our attentions, and it was not long before we were ready.

The sound of Mercédès quickly collected a picturesque crowd, the proprietor beaming upon us like a full moon, and altogether we received a hearty send-off.

Passing through the bazaar we left the town by the narrow Travnik gate, commencing to ascend the miles of beautiful cataracts by which the Pliva descends from Jacero. To our left the clear waters splash in joyous freedom, while on our right the country upon the slopes of the gentle hills is a land flowing with milk and honey. Acres of vines twist their heavily laden branches in bewildering numbers. Here and there the vineyards are broken by large fields of Indian corn, dotted with white specks, the peasants working and collecting the corn-pods; sometimes we would come upon a herd of goats and sheep browsing lazily, while a Christian peasant woman, in man's clothing, watched over them and spun flax at the same time.

All too soon we reached the lake. It is indeed an idyllic spot, not grand or majestic like Uri or Wallenstadt, and equally dissimilar to the beauties of Riva, Como, Lugano, or any of the lovely Italian lakes. Jacero has a lingering fascination almost impossible to put into words: the two beautiful pyramid mountains, the Ottomal and the Ostrobrdo, are reflected faithfully in the glassy surface; the wonderful verdure, the intense green of the trees, the vivid blue of a sky innocent of clouds; above all, an air of dream-like sweetness that is charming in its very restfulness. Perhaps the only fault that can be found with the lake is its shortness, and it seemed no time before we reached the little village of Jacero at the farthest end. The hamlet is merely a collection of low wooden huts; here the Austrians have erected a picturesque rest-house, where boats may be hired. Centuries ago a Turkish Beg built his house upon

this spot in order to be able to take the ladies of his harem for an airing upon the still waters. There is nothing past Jacero to visit, and we turned Mercédès amidst the wonderment of an ever-increasing circle of awe-struck natives. Reluctantly we made our way slowly back, till, coming upon a place in the road where a giant tree spread forth its branches, we stopped Mercédès in the cool shade close to the glassy waters and descended to enjoy the ideal afternoon. Soon several peasants appeared, but halted at a respectful distance.

Wandering upon the shore we encountered a weirdly dressed figure of a fisherman ; after some difficulty we persuaded him of our earthly origin, and though he spoke but little German he soon became friendly, showing us his " permit " from the Austrian Government, which gives him leave to catch trout and crayfish during three months of each year. In illustration he groped among the logs awash upon the shore and speedily produced a very fine crayfish. Ken and I divested ourselves of our coats and, turning up our sleeves, commenced to poach in real earnest, to the great delight of an augmented audience. Our exertions quickly resulted in a fine haul, which we determined to take back to the hotel and have boiled for dinner.

Meanwhile Rodgers had been preparing tea and laying an appetising spread beneath the green branches. By the time he had finished we had captured some two dozen unlucky crayfish, who were tenderly wrapped in our handkerchiefs for future use.

A weather-beaten, flax-spinning cowherd arrived with his animals upon the scene and at our signs filled a glass with new milk from one of his gentle, shaggy cows. What a glorious tea we enjoyed, surrounded by figures who might have stepped out of some pageant of the Middle Ages, yet whose manner was gentleness itself.

Tea was unknown, but one bright-eyed youth, who

was eating walnuts, of which he kept a large stock inside his shirt, was at last induced to sip a mouthful. He enjoyed it immensely, and at once offered his whole stock of nuts in return. A few gulden bestowed with diplomatic care, an art we had learnt in Spain, brought unbounded delight into the faces of the peasants, and it was almost pathetic to see the joy with which they showed each other the pieces of silver, as though hardly crediting the possession of such unlimited wealth. Even the fisherman could hardly make enough of us, and it was amidst a perfect fervour of thanks and shouts and good-byes that we drove from beneath the shade of the hospitable tree.

The sun was threatening each moment to disappear behind the rich hills as we passed through the Travnik gate, and the hour of the *muezzin* arrived as we drew up before the hotel doorway. The greeting of the proprietor was drowned in the combined wailing of the priests and every minaret blazed with lights.

The crayfish, seized by the proprietor, disappeared into unknown regions, and upon their reappearance at dinner they had not only changed colour, but had shrunk considerably in number. Nevertheless, we enjoyed what was left of them immensely, whilst discussing the doings of the day and our journey on the morrow.

The sun had risen an hour or more by the time we were ready for our journey to Sarájevo, some one hundred miles distant. We were looking forward with lively anticipation to seeing this renowned capital, connected so closely with the history of Bosnia. Passing for the last time through the Travnik gate, we bid a sad farewell to beautiful Jajce. It would be impossible to spend even a short time within its ancient walls, surrounded on every side by its maze of enchanted legends, and peopled by its ghosts of the past, without feeling sorry to say good-bye. Its gorgeous position upon the summit of the

cone-shaped hill, above its renowned falls, gave it the title of the " Jewel of Bosnia," which, perhaps, describes it far more realistically than any words of mine.

Crossing the Pliva and the Vrbas we continued to follow the latter valley. The scenery, though not to be compared with that between Banjaluka and Jajce, was nevertheless very beautiful and increased in grandeur as we progressed. The road is good, though a trifle narrow here and there, following the twisty valley upon the left bank of the stream. Unfortunately we met large companies of peasantry coming to the Jajce market, whose animals caused no end of trouble and made our progress exceedingly slow ; each smart little pony laden with wood rose instantly upon its hind legs, endeavouring to place its load of wood upon the head of its master, while the mules, one and all, seemed blessed with a gift of being able to run up the perpendicular precipices of rock. Sometimes a veiled woman on horseback, led by a young Turk, would appear ; but before the animal could so much as throw forward its ears the woman would scramble to the ground, not forgetting to hold the veil tight across her face, lest an unbeliever should obtain a sight of her features.

Dolnji Vakuf, our junction, lies some twenty-five miles from Jajce. Here we turn at right angles and bid good-bye to the Vrbas.

When Sheila and I made our dash back to civilisation last year we journeyed by the new road, which is really a continuation of the one from Jajce and follows the river into the hills. It is an exhilarating drive, crossing a great mountain pass and bringing one into the Narenta defile above Mostar. So pressing was our need that we made 165 miles that day, which, considering the wild country passed through, we regarded as rather a sporting journey. But to return to the present tour. Vakuf is quite in keeping with the best traditions of Bosnia ; its

streets are Turkish to the core, lined with low-roofed, wooden houses protected by high palisades, thoroughly Eastern in every sense of the word.

Our road turns sharp to the left and mounts a steep hill ; we are running between high boarding upon either side, which protects the Moslem mother from the view of the Christian, as she goes about her housework.

At the top of the hill stands a pure white mosque with a slender minaret, graceful in form and very pleasing to the eye. We had to go slowly on account of the manœuvres of the street and the swarm of Turkish children who chattered around us—quaint miniatures in fez and turban, with flowing trousers and red dyed hair ; for the girls do not veil till they become marriageable, about thirteen years of age, but play with the boys just as do the Christians.

Once free of the town we are speeding through sweet country, mile after mile of damson trees, weighed down with a profusion of the luscious fruit, for damson-growing is one of the staple industries of Bosnia and forms no small percentage of the actual food of the people. Here and there by the side of the Indian corn fields are huge patches of melons, with their waving yellow flowers, while peeping at us from amidst the trees and maize we spy many queer-dressed figures, who look for all the world as though they had stepped out of some picture-book. Our road cuts deep through the mountainous plain of Radovan-Planina, which stretches, a vast wilderness, between the Vrbas and the Lashva. Here and there we come upon signs of ancient civilisation ; huge Bogomile gravestones and broken sarcophagi rotting among the trees, traces of the wondrous and extinct race whose last stronghold, the Narenta defile, lay journeys before us, and whose faith was the cause of the passing of Bosnia from the Cross to the Crescent. There is nothing remarkable about the scenery, though it is rather fine in a

mild way. Presently the valley begins to contract and gradually narrows till it opens out into a large plain, and we come in sight of Travnik with startling suddenness.

Travnik is essentially a Turkish town, and its nearer acquaintance does not belie the first impression obtained from a distance. The ruins of a noble castle rise from the summit of a steep hill round which nestles a collection of quaint little white houses with heavy wooden roofs, broken here and there by graceful mosques, one slender white minaret shooting up from the interior of the castle itself. Travnik, before Turkish days, lay more than a mile from the castle hill in the open plain and was known as Lashva, but the troubled times of the fourteenth century saw the town destroyed and rebuilt at the entrance of the deep valley from which we had just emerged. Like the people of Sarájevo, those of Travnik felt more secure in this position when at a moment's notice they could retire into the fastnesses of the mountains, from the continuous devastating insurrections that shook Bosnia for so many centuries.

Travnik of to-day is still Turkish in every sense of the word; the houses are invariably built of wood, and the narrow streets twist at every conceivable angle. Its former grandeur, as the seat of the "Vali of Hungary," is much in evidence in the neglected palaces of its long-dead Viziers, with their courtyards and arcades. Mosques abound upon every side and the streets are alive with the colour of the East. After the Turkish invasion the Government was established at Sarájevo, as the Moslem continued northward, strong in the hope of spreading the Faith of the Sword throughout Europe; and Jajce had fallen, together with it the lands beyond the Save; Banjaluka was selected as the head-quarters of the Northern Government. The loss of Buda in 1686 compelled the Turks to consider that Banjaluka lay within

reach of the Christian arm, and as they did not wish to fall back as far as Sarájevo they hit upon the happy medium of selecting Travnik as the seat of the Begs of Bosnia, hoping to recapture the lands wrested from them. The Begs of Bosnia soon became a thorn in the side of their Sultan, becoming yearly more powerful, and the Sultan, rightly feeling that at such a distance they were slowly but surely slipping from his control, endeavoured to transfer the seat of the Northern Government back to Sarájevo. But the Begs of Bosnia, who lived in almost royal state, refused to obey the Sultan's Vizier residing at Sarájevo, and it was not until after the serious revolt of the Begs in 1850, which was crushed by the strong hand of Omar Pasha (of whom more anon), that the Sublime Porte was able to carry out its cherished plan.

Bosnia always presented a difficult problem to the Sultans at Stamboul. Ami Boué calls it the La Vendée of Turkey. Its distance and the incessant changing of its governors tended to weaken the supreme authority; but perhaps more than anything else was the inherent respect and fidelity commanded by the noble families of Bosnia. The representative of the Sultan was often a nobody, and was only tolerated by the people as a necessary evil and was seldom respected; while among the haughty Begs he was regarded as an undesirable upstart. Occasionally a man of family was sent from Stamboul whose word was law, and who insisted upon implicit obedience, but as a rule the aristocratic community of Bosnia ruled supreme.

The old castle upon the hill is well preserved and proudly traces itself back to the days of Tvrtko. We did not halt, however, but passed slowly through the town. It was market day and the streets were ablaze with native colour, the peasant women being especially gorgeous in their brilliant dresses and proudly wearing

TRAVNIK IS ESSENTIALLY A TURKISH TOWN. (BOSNIA)

innumerable silver coins and heavy curious ornaments of the same metal. These, of course, were the Christian women from the countryside, the Moslem women being few and far between, and looking rather miserable in their ungainly robes with their narrow outlook upon the world.

We experienced rather a curious and, at the same time, amusing incident just as we reached the first houses of the town. Beside the road there stands a little whitewashed house with a straw roof, looking not unlike an extinct toll-bar ; a wooden waggon drawn by a couple of restive mules stood behind the house upon the opposite side of the road. Perceiving us, though at a considerable distance, they laid their ears back and simultaneously bounded straight at the house. The white-robed, red-turbaned driver was tumbled head over heels on to the dusty road, and in less time than it takes to tell the mules had dragged the heavy waggon across the road and rammed the long pole straight into the white wall, between the doorway and the window. But this was not all : the walls were mere plaster and thin wood, and the pole went right through, until, just as the mules' heads came in contact with the walls, it seemed to jam and lifted the two animals off their feet. Instantly pandemonium reigned supreme. The driver picked himself up, rushed shouting to the animals' heads, and on his way came into violent contact with a stream of screaming figures, who poured out of the doorway in indignant expostulation at having their privacy intruded upon by two feet of wooden pole. As it would be impossible to attempt to cope with the torrent of weird gutturals resounding upon every side, we quickly passed on, no real damage having resulted.

From Travnik to Sarájevo is some sixty miles, and the scenery is often very beautiful. We continue to ascend after leaving the town, following the single-line railway that penetrates into the hills. The end of the valley is

blocked by a great mass of mountains. While the railway creeps upwards by the help of cogs, and finally burrows into the hills, the road doubles back upon itself and ascends some thousand feet or more. It is an exhilarating climb, the ground slipping from beneath us, the fresh air blowing full in our faces. We can look back upon a great vista of fruitful Bosnia : deep forests, swelling hills and, far away upon the horizon, acres of waving damson trees. The air is delightfully refreshing, and the exhilaration of motion is magnificent. Upon the summit we gaze towards the east. Some fifteen hundred feet below lies the valley, to which the road descends in great curves and many graceful sweeps, the whole scene being not unlike an alpine landscape. Upon the waving carpet of green twists and turns the white stretch of road, like a gigantic serpent. The descent is very beautiful ; time after time we cross the old road, now fallen into disuse, bringing back very vividly to the mind the agonies and dangers that the traveller had to face under Moslem administration. Once in the valley we reach more open country, though there is yet one rather steep and twisty climb to face, which, however, presents no serious obstacle.

At one spot we were particularly favoured by witnessing a great open-air religious ceremony of the *rayahs*, or Christian peasants. We had been passing through thick woods upon the slope of a low range of hills, and suddenly came upon a stretch where the road for half a kilometre was free of trees ; to our right, farther up the slope, a palisade of rough timbers formed a large square, filled with a huge gathering of country folk in their brightest dresses ; scarlet predominates and, catching the sunbeams, seems to burn with riotous colour. All were upon their knees, facing a stone altar, where a white-robed priest officiated. It was a moving spectacle, for not so very many years ago these *rayahs* had to meet together in secret to worship their God, despised by the Moslem,

when their meeting might be rudely broken up at any moment and themselves subjected to the greatest outrages.

As Mercédès evidently distracted their attention we drove quickly past, feeling half ashamed at having surprised the congregation at their sacred duties.

The road now crosses some unimportant hills and finally passes through a gentle defile. It was past three o'clock when we emerged into the Sarájevo Polje, or plain of Sarájevo. Sheila had Mr. Evans' book open upon her knees, and had been reading the description as he neared the capital. This was in 1875, and he had just received word of the expected revolt of the *gyaurs* or " unbelievers."

Exasperated beyond endurance by the continual brutalities of the Turks, commencing at Banjaluka and along the Save, the oppressed *rayahs* had risen, and the Moslems were commencing to take a terrible revenge upon every Christian who fell into their hands.

Mr. Evans and his brother suffered no little inconvenience, and though his experiences in the heart of Bosnia were liable to be abruptly ended at any moment, he found time to admire the beauties of Sarájevo. He must have approached it upon such an afternoon as this, for as it did to him, so a turn in the road revealed to us the " Damascus of the North—for such is the majestic title by which the Bosniac Turks delight to style Sarájevo, who consider it, after Stamboul, the finest city of Turkey in Europe." Well may the city be said to be " one vast garden, amidst whose foliage swell the domes and cupolas of mosques and baths," shining like precious stones in the dazzling light, situated at the mouth of a wild gorge dividing a range of rugged mountains, through which issues the river Mitialchka, or " gently whispering," ere it flows through the town.

The first glance at Sarájevo, as it rises from the plain

upon the lower slopes of the hills, with its countless mosques and minarets, presents an ideal picture of Islam, but on closer acquaintance one is surprised to find a modern portion filled with large blocks of houses and barracks, from which Austria's troops keep a watchful eye upon the town.

Higher up rises the new Serbian cathedral, whose belfry years ago caused such dissatisfaction among the " faithful." Then there are the four cupolas of the gorgeous Jewish synagogue which form a landmark for many miles. Upon the summit of a black-brown hill, to the left, stands the turreted Turkish fortress built originally by the first Vizier of Bosnia, upon the spot where the " Grad " of the old Bosnian monarchy once stood. From its eminence it dominates the town, for ever a beacon of Moslem supremacy. Behind it the line of hills gives place to great mountains, vegetation quickly ceases, and bare, brown, barren rock takes its place, finally giving way to jagged limestone suggestive of Montenegro, and forming an arena of mountains rising to a height of nearly five thousand feet. Travellers by train are under the misfortune of being unable to appreciate the approach to their destination. To the road traveller the great pleasure is in the journey itself, quite apart from the enjoyment of the town to be visited, and often we would strain our eyes upon rounding a turn to be the first to catch a glimpse of some city whose history we had been reading. Again, one can approach a place as the succeeding armies of conquerors did, traversing the scenes they passed through, inspecting a battlefield here, a forgotten grave there, gathering thereby a thousand beautiful ideals and ideas of the surrounding country, and getting more and more in touch with its people.

Of Sarájevo we knew all that Evans, Ashboth and Capus could tell; but no description, however well written, or picture, however well painted, can ever

quite give an adequate idea of the place itself. The chivalrous little republic of Ragusa was originally responsible for Sarájevo or Bosna, as it was first called; for that energetic state had sent envoys and explorers to discover and work mines on Mount Jagodina, and they erected their huts upon the spot where Sarájevo now stands. Though it was made into the seat of the Catholic bishops in 1286, it was of little importance, save as a stronghold of the Bosnian kings, until it was captured by the Turks in 1464. During the years immediately following many of the great Bosniac families set the example, quickly followed by the nobility, of turning to the faith of Islam, and it was then that the present town at the mouth of the gorge was founded.

The first Vizier, Khosrev Pasha, he who built the castle or serai, walled in the upper portion of the town. "Bosna Serai" soon degenerated into Sarájevo, and its importance increased by leaps and bounds. Prince Eugene, of romantic memory, burning with a desire to show the Moslem that the Christians could still strike a blow, and seizing one of those brilliant opportunities which his adventurous soul loved, made a foolhardy twenty-day dash into the heart of Bosnia in 1697.

Arriving before Sarájevo, he demanded its surrender, and upon the murder of his herald ordered the sack of the city. After a desperate fight he succeeded in seizing, and destroying by fire, the whole of the lower town, some six hundred houses and about one hundred and sixty mosques. Finding the *Serai* too strong for the limited force of volunteers at his command, he contented himself with the damage he had inflicted and conducted a masterly retreat to the Save, lit, so it is said, during the two days that the retreat occupied, by the lurid glow of the burning houses of Sarájevo.

Later came the trouble with the Janizaries, who were for ever thorns in the side of the Sultan. Bosnia was

now part of the great Turkish Empire, yet her powerful families, though converted to Moslemism, jealously guarded their hereditary privileges and dignities. To such a state of authority did the Bosnian Janizaries rise that they practically ruled the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Sultan's suzerainty had to be administered with the utmost tact. The Janizaries of Bosna Serai administered the laws and were the supreme rulers, holding doggedly to their former customs. It is even related that they made a law which forbade the "Vizier of all Bosnia" to remain longer than one whole day at a time in the town. For twenty-four hours he was the guest of the city, after which he was conducted with much ceremony, but no less promptitude and firmness, outside the walls. The lieutenant of the Sultan at Travnik, who held the proud title of "Vali of Hungary," quaked in his shoes with fear of the Janizaries of Bosna Serai, at whose will he could be expelled and replaced.

Mahmud II, at the beginning of the last century, determined to rid himself of the powerful Janizaries throughout his realm. Commencing at Stamboul, he was successful in abolishing them there, but this act was a signal for their brothers of Sarájevo to burst into revolt. The Sultan's Vizier and his troops stormed the town and, after much fierce fighting, succeeded in capturing the citadel. Once ensconced in the *Serai*, he determined to extract such retribution as would make it impossible to reorganise further resistance. He played the tyrant very successfully, and executed over one hundred members of the highest and most powerful families of Bosnia. This done, he settled himself comfortably in the castle, whose guest he had never been for more than twenty-four hours before the rebellion, and felt that all further trouble was at an end. The result proved how mistaken he was,

and how the inherent spirit of freedom dwelt in the people. The next few months passed in peace (or rather in very suspicious quietness, and had the Vizier not been so sure he must have noticed it). Like the silence which precedes an execution, it reigned until July 1828, when the match was applied and the mine exploded. Like the mob of Paris, the whole populace of Sarájevo rose, aided by their brothers of Visoko, to take a full and ample revenge upon the Vizier and his men. The Vizier had with him two thousand trained and faithful troops, and there then commenced some of the most bitter and brutal street fighting, that has only had its parallel in the rising of the Milanese against their Austrian tyrants. From house to house the people drove back the Sultan's soldiers, who, with the utmost ferocity and bravery, contested every foot of ground. Street after street was taken at the point of the sword, and the remnants of the troops were driven behind the fortified walls of the *Serai*.

But such was the fury of the populace that they would have willingly stormed the citadel and strangled the Vizier, had not the latter jumped at an offer of surrender and with the remnants of his tattered troops marched out of the town, leaving the folk of Sarájevo in full possession of the land their fathers ruled. The Russian war now occupied the attention of the Sultan, and it was not until its completion in 1830 that he was enabled to devote time to these disturbed provinces. It was in the following year that the great revolt, originated at Banjaluka by Hüssein Aga Berberli (whose history I have previously recounted), occurred and was squashed by Reshid Pasha. Continuing the reforms, and at the same time throwing a sop to the Christian powers, a law was introduced in 1839 which gave to the despised Christians a very few privileges. This instantly caused an insurrection among the Faithful, promptly suppressed by Veledshia Pasha at the gates of Sarájevo. The continued

social reforms of this last-named Vizier so outraged the feelings of the Moslem that his recall was made the price of their refraining from turning Christians *en masse*, a threat hurled as a last resource against the Sultan. Matters lay in this state until 1850, when Ali Pasha was sent to carry out further reforms. Ali Pasha, whose further acquaintance we shall make at Mostar, became filled with his own importance and himself unfurled the banner of revolt, but was no match for Omar Pasha. Reforms, however, need to be administered by a strong and wise hand; under those who followed they degenerated into a mockery, so that until the Austrian occupation of 1878 there followed one Christian rising after another.

The stormy history of Sarájevo ends upon the 19th of August, 1878, when the Army of Occupation, under General Philippovitch, arrived before the gates. Despite the official order from Stamboul, the fanatical Mussulmans offered a stubborn resistance, being inflamed by the exhortations of their priests and Dervishes, and unheeding the counsels of the older and wiser men. During nine hours there raged a scene of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting that the town has ever seen; each house became a fortress, having to be taken at the sword's point, the mosques being overcrowded by fanatics, each intent on killing at least one unbeliever ere receiving his reward in paradise. Even the women and children were seen firing through the windows of the harems, while young boys rushed, knife in hand, upon the very muzzles of the guns. At last the *Serai* and the surrounding heights were in Austrian hands, and Sarájevo, the "Damascus of the North," was lost to the Crescent for ever.

It is only when one reviews the stormy history of Bosnia from its birth upwards, through all the centuries of war and pillage (a land occupied by so many different

creeds and peoples, each jealous of the other, and each directly it obtained supremacy exercising its power ruthlessly over its less fortunate neighbours), that one can form any conception of the difficult task that Austria had to face in 1878, when she sent her troops to stay the butchery of the Christians, and afterwards, under the Berlin Treaty, was given the administration of the country, though the Moslems still owed nominal allegiance to the Sultan.

In the north the *rayahs* are Catholics, while in the south they are Orthodox (like their brothers in Montenegro and Serbia), and the remaining two-thirds of the people are Moslems and Jews. When such a Catholic land as the Dual Empire was given full control the Catholics of Bosnia and Herzegovina rejoiced greatly, under the impression that they would be the favoured of all the people, while the Moslems, fearing extinction, determined to fight to the death, and the Orthodox were appalled at the thought of being exposed to the tender mercies of the Roman Church. With such inflammable material as this Austria had a task whose difficulties it would be impossible to exaggerate.

A tour of the country to-day is perhaps the only real way of realising the solution of the problem. Without preference, she has given absolute equality to every creed and race, Moslem, Jew, Christian, Roman and Orthodox ; there is no favouring one at the expense of the other. The fact that speaks most for the absolute impartiality of Austrian rule is that the Catholics of Bosnia and Herzegovina are the most dissatisfied of the four faiths, and complain that they have not received the special privileges they had hoped for.

Sarájevo has two distinct towns, and though they are interwoven one with the other, they are really as separate as though they lay miles apart. Modern Sarájevo was quite a surprise to us, travelling as we had been through

a land not unlike the remoter parts of Turkey. We entered a long avenue shaded by trees, upon the embankment of the rippling waters, where, to our surprise, we were met by an electric tram, in which four Moslem women sat, a curious contrast. By the way, it is rather amusing to watch a Moslem woman when she boards a tram; probably she has one or two parcels to carry, and while holding these with one hand has to search for her purse with the other; at the same time she is endeavouring to keep her veil from falling from before her face, and her endeavour to simultaneously perform these three separate actions with two hands is often ludicrous.

Welcomed by the electric tram, we were ushered into a long modern-looking street flanked by green trees. Across the river rises the magnificent Jewish synagogue, its very gorgeousness testifying to the prosperity of that wandering race in Sarájevo. Beside it are the Government offices and the large barracks, and behind, upon the mountain slopes, rise many of the two hundred odd mosques which the city boasts of possessing.

Turning to the left, we enter the Franje Josipa Ulica, a modern-looking street of plain square houses, the lower portions of which are shops. In this street stands the Hotel Europa, its name printed upon a large board in French, German, Magyar and Turkish. The entrance is up a rather narrow side street, and by the time we had descended and unpacked the luggage there was not standing room within fifty yards of Mercédès.

The Hotel Europa is a palatial establishment, according to Bosnia. The whole ground floor is composed of a dining-room and a café; there are no reception-rooms of any description. You engage a bedroom and sitting-room, paying the maid upon your floor, and your meals are taken in the public restaurant and paid for at the time, similar to the custom in force in many parts of Germany.

It was rather late when we arrived, and by the time Mercédès was safely housed in the execrable open yard of the hotel night had fallen. From every minaret came the wail of the *muezzin*, and a babel of plaintive voices bore witness that " there is no god but Allah, and Mahommed is His prophet."

Just at the back of the hotel stands a white mosque whose slender minaret rises very close to the building. Rodgers, whose room was at the back, informed me next day of a startling experience he had had during the night. It appears that as the evening was painfully oppressive he had opened his windows and retired to rest. In the still watches of the night he was roused by a strange voice calling in an unknown tongue into his very room, as it seemed. He rushed to the window and, leaning out, found himself almost within hand-shaking distance of a white-bearded, dark-faced priest upon the circular balcony of the minaret. Being the holy month of *Ramadan*, religious ceremonies were of continuous occurrence, and twice more during the night and at sunrise was Rodgers awakened by the call to prayer, which seemed to have the power of penetrating with equal volume through the now closed windows of his room, and which, I fear, proved in his instance a call to anything but pious thoughts.

CHAPTER V

THE DAMASCUS OF THE NORTH

MODERN SARÁJEVO—THE TSHARSHIJA—MOSLEM AND JEW, HISTORY OF THE LATTER—BEGOVA-DZAMIA—THE ČARČIJA—ENCHANTING MELODY—MARKET DAY—KEN COMES INTO VIOLENT CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORITIES—IS ARRESTED AND LIBERATED—STAY IN SARÁJEVO, MOSLEM QUARTERS—VEILED WOMEN—VISIT TO THE GREAT MOSQUE—SERBIAN FÊTE—GORGEOUS DRESSES.

SARÁJEVO is one of the most interesting capitals I have ever visited. As a matter of fact it is really a town within a town. The heart of the city is the *Tsharshija* or Moslem bazaar. This is surrounded by the Christian town, which in turn is enveloped by the Moslem and Christian residences upon the slopes of the surrounding hills; and as though this were not sufficient, Austria has constructed a further circle, a circle of steel, for upon every summit there bristles an ugly-looking fort. At one moment you step from West to East, and the next minute you are back again in the world you know.

"Sarájevo s'intitule fièrement la 'ville des palais' et se targue dans l'esprit des indigènes, d'être la plus belle ville après Tzarigrad, la ville du sultan. Ils la célèbrent dans leurs chansons et vantent la beauté de ses palais de marbre, l'éclat de ses marchés et la grandeur de ses places publiques"—to quote the words of M. Capus.

A STREET OF THE TSHARSHIJA. SARÁJEVO

After breakfast next morning we strode out into the blazing sunlight to introduce Ken and Dorothy to this panorama-like city. We traverse the Franje Josipa Ulica until we reach an unpretentious archway about two hundred yards from the hotel. Emerging from this we might have stepped out of Europe, as we understand the word. Gone were the modern dwellings, the up-to-date shops and the Viennese cafés, for we are in the *Tsharshija*, the great bazaar of the native town. Stamboul cannot show a better or more typical example of Moslem life: the street in which we found ourselves was narrow in the extreme, the sides formed of two long lines of bazaars, where goods from the East were piled up in the utmost profusion, and among which squatted hundreds of cross-legged turbaned salesmen. The traffic of the narrow street is delightfully original, and comprises every nationality: Croatians, Serbians, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Hungarians, Greeks, Turks, Jews and gipsies elbow one another; the types of dresses and costumes run riot, and the brilliancy and variety of colour almost dazzle the eye. But though at first sight all seems to be confusion, this is not so. Every trade has a street of its own and does not compete side by side with another; thus there is the tiny street of the iron industry, where quantities of Moslems are busy as bees making iron nails, tubs, door handles, knockers, etc. Turn down another of the lanes and you are in the copper street, where the sound of hammering is incessant and a perfect hive of Orientals squat working with feverish activity; in each box you will find perhaps six men and boys fashioning the brown metal into cunning shapes, fancy bowls and cups, large plates, coffee services and a thousand and one beautiful things that delight the eye. Here is the street of the shoemakers; swing, swing go their hands, so quickly that the eye can hardly follow, and every moment adds to the number of shoes and

slippers which entirely cover the wooden sills of the shops. Here is the street of the leather workers, making bags, aprons and purses ; here the tailors sew, sew, as though their very life depended upon their industry. Thus we pass along, noting shop after shop, street after street, all filled with earnest workers, until one is appalled at the frenzy for work displayed upon every side ; then a corner is turned and the scene again changes. We are now in the street of the bakers, who, less noisy, give one a feeling of rest, for they sit placidly in long rows extolling in a low voice the beauty and weight of their bread. The loaves are large, round, and flat upon one side, and the queer customers, principally Mahommedan women, handle one after the other, carefully trying to determine which constitutes the best value for their money. Sometimes a burly countryman, who has just purchased a few pounds of those luscious damsons for which Bosnia is world-famous, buys a loaf to eat with them, and is, of course, a much easier victim for the baker to deal with. Surprising as it may seem, the majority of the bazaar-keepers in the shops are Jews, the descendants of those who, to escape the terrible persecutions of the Inquisition in Spain, fled from that country in 1574, and obtaining permission from the Sultan Murad III, settled in Bosnia.

They are very proud of their descent and refuse to mix or have any intercourse with those of their race from Germany or Austria. To the uninitiated they appear precisely identical in dress with the Moslems, save that their faces are full of craft and their manner very different. The Moslem trader squats in dignified silence among his wares, gravely drinking coffee or smoking the Bosniac cigarette. If you halt to admire his stock, some choice piece of filigree jewellery or string of beads, or whether you pass on, is a matter of utter indifference to him ; he eyes you with a solemn look, but does not attempt

HERE THE TAILORS SEW—SEW AS THOUGH THEIR VERY LIVES DEPENDED UPON THEIR INDUSTRY. (SARÁJEVO)

to speak, and if you ask him the price, he slowly and very distinctly states the figure. It may seem a trifle too much, and with the remembrance of the Jew at the next stall (who eventually took half his original price and would have been pleased with a third), you offer less. The Moslem looks at you with the same quiet air and again names the sum ; you argue, and he shakes his head and once more repeats his words in a resigned manner, as though teaching a child its lesson. Do you offer but one kreutzer less than the price named he will not deal with you, for you must know that although the Moslems are bloodthirsty and treacherous upon occasions of religious excitement, they are at all times scrupulously honest and trustworthy in buying and selling. Is it not the direct command of Allah, expressed through Mahommed his prophet, and to be read in the Holy Koran ? " Woe be unto those who give short measure or weight, who when they receive the measure from other men take the full, but when they measure unto them, or weigh unto them, defraud. Let not these think that they shall be raised again at the great day, that day whereupon mankind shall stand before the Lord of all creation."

The Jew, for instance, will call out to you as you pass his shop, will even pull at your sleeve, and should you be tempted to look at his ware will demand a price that, if you be firm, will be reduced one-half or even more.

Four centuries have transformed the Jew into an outward Moslem, though in private they practise the rites of their own religion. The Jewish colony of Sarájevo is very interesting. Speaking Bosniac without an accent, they always address each other in Spanish, and Spanish that is seldom heard in Spain, the almost pure Lingua Castalleña of the fifteenth century, which has been handed from father to son down to the present day.

They are very intolerant of anything that might tend

to alter their ancient customs, also they are by far the richest class of people in Sarájevo, and, until the Austrian accession, were the sole bankers and money-lenders of the country. It is even whispered that they were not too particular in their dealings, and that their victims were numerous. However this may be, they look after their own poor in a wonderfully efficient manner, and boast that no Jew begs, robs, or murders in the streets.

They are an undersized race, and physically compare very poorly with the dignified figure of the Moslem. As the Jews of Sarájevo despise and look down upon those from other lands, so do the Christians of Sarájevo despise and look down upon the *rayah* of the surrounding country. But Jew and Gentile, Moslem and heathen, all rub elbows and hustle one another in the narrow streets, each bent upon his own business. The Jewish maidens are often of a very beautiful type, and seem to do all in their power to heighten the effect, dressing in bright colours and wearing a saucy little red fez set at a provoking angle amidst a wonderful profusion of jet-black locks often ornamented by sweet-smelling flowers. It is only in such scenes as these that one realises what an Eastern race the Jews really are, and how they gather local colour from their surroundings. The Jewish matrons, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme and endeavour to make themselves appear as unprepossessing as possible. Wearing their hair brushed tightly back from the forehead, it is plaited and wound into as small a space as possible, and the clump thus formed is concealed by an appalling hat, if such a thing could, by the wildest stretch of imagination, be called a hat. This monstrosity at first sight (that is, after you have digested the whole and recovered sufficiently to analyse the different disfigurements) appears to be made of a roll of stiff cloth about four inches broad and perhaps two feet long,

THE ENTRANCE TO THE BEGOYA-DZAMIA MOSQUE. (SARÁJEVO)

simply folded into a poor imitation of a forage-cap and fastened to the hair by modern hat-pins.

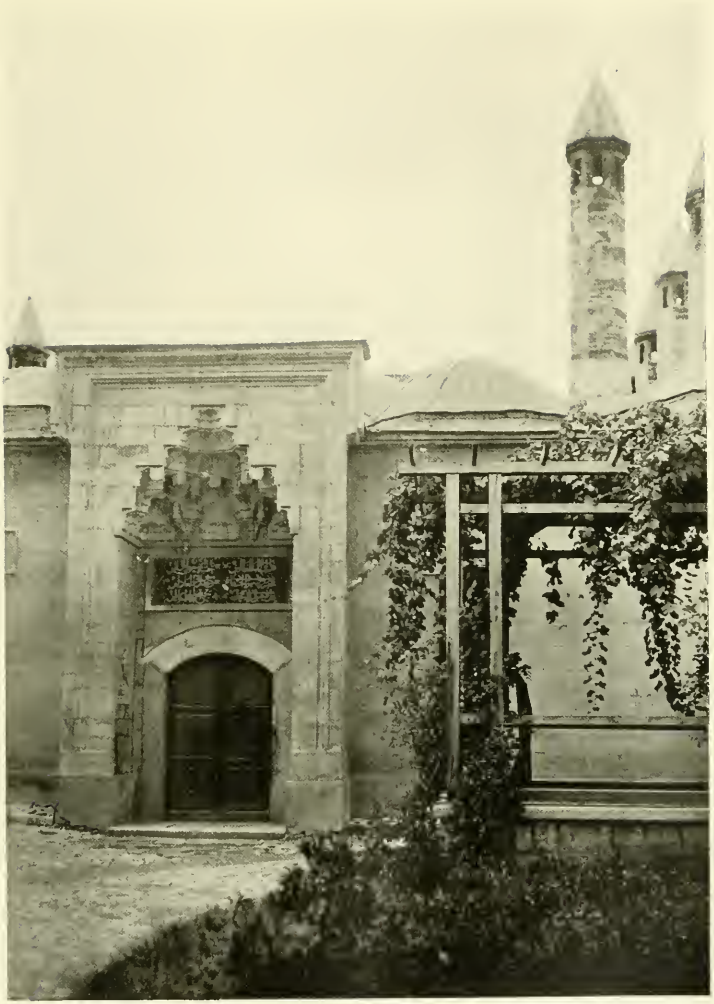
In the centre of the main street stands the beautiful Begoya-Dzamia, the largest and finest mosque in Europe, next, of course, to that at Constantinople and the Selinis Mosque at Adrianople. This exquisite edifice was founded, we are told, by Usref Beg himself, who at the same time planted a sycamore tree before its doors. This must have been about the latter part of the sixteenth century, and that venerable tree has now grown to be quite a giant, throwing a welcome shade over the whole of the large courtyard before the main entrance to the mosque. In the centre of this courtyard stands a graceful fountain surrounded perpetually by would-be worshippers anxious to complete the prescribed ablutions of the *Ghusél* according to the Koran. Cleanliness is next to godliness to the Moslem; indeed, Mahommed declared it to be one half of the true faith and the keynote to prayer. To the Christian, who washes when he rises and when he retires, and in a half-hearted manner wets the tips of his fingers during the day, the Moslem appears to spend the better portion of his life cleaning himself. Kicking off his picturesque shoes with the turned-up toes, he plunges his bare feet into the cool stream; next come his arms, then hands and head, drying himself upon a snow-white towel and turning down his spotless shirt of soft white material. No Englishman apparently loves his tub more than these followers of Islam enjoy their endless ablutions.

The entrance of the mosque is always a very interesting scene; in the foreground is the crowd round the fountain, splashing and talking together beneath the venerable sycamore. The entrance is formed by a long colonnade supported by pillars, and above rise the large dome and shining cupolas. Many of the worshippers do not enter the open door, but content themselves by saying their

prayers in the beautiful portico. Taking off their shoes, of which hundreds of pairs line the steps, the figures are seen performing their ceremonies, consisting of incessantly standing, bowing, squatting and touching the floor with the forehead, while each movement corresponds to a stated verse from the Koran.

Once off the sacred floor all restraint is at an end: children dash about the courtyard, shouting to and chasing one another as they run round the fountain; the men washing themselves laugh and talk loudly; while at the doors squat a row of tattered mummies, begging in a whining voice. One would think that all this noise and bustle would disturb the pious prayers of the Faithful, but they do not seem to hear. In this same courtyard is a stone exactly the Turkish equivalent in length to our yard. Hither come the disputants from the bazaar to settle their difficulties and to determine the exact measure. To the left of the courtyard stands a large sarcophagus, the shrine of Usref Beg and his wife. Opposite this great mosque, upon the other side of the narrow bazaar street, stands the *madrasa* or seminary, where Mahommedan youths who desire to enter the priesthood are given a complete education free of all cost. Like the mosque, this pious work was founded by Usref Beg, who not only was very devout, but earned for himself a reputation for personal valour, and at the siege of Jajce he gained the proud title of *Gizei* or "Conqueror of the Infidel"; but of the two, his great piety seems to have obtained the chief hold upon the minds of the people, who are never tired of extolling his virtues.

At one side of the *madrasa* squats a learned-looking Moslem in his shop, about the size of a small sentry-box. He is a venerable figure, with snow-white hair and long beard. He sits cross-legged in a perfect maze of musty-looking volumes, and supported by his bent knees is a board, on which there is paper, inkhorn and quill. This



THE "MADRASA." SARÁJEVO

is the one and only public letter-writer of the *Tsharshija*, and his clients are numerous and varied.

Not far from the Begova-Dzamia is the *čarčija*, the market-place of Sarájevo, and perhaps of all this quaint spot the most interesting. As it happened, this was market-day, and the noise was incessant. The market is really a large space surrounded by bazaars ; in the centre stands a high fountain, approached by several stone steps, upon which is seated a medley of strange types. Standing upon the topmost step, looking down upon the throng (and what a throng !), the idea that we are in Europe seems incredible, unless these are mythical figures ; but no, they are real enough—it is we ourselves who are the myths. As I said before, the *čarčija* is really a clearing among the narrow streets of the bazaar, and the moving, shouting throng is increased every minute by the streams of people pouring out from the crowded lanes. Along the sides of this market-place are the usual open shops, but so important is their position considered that they are doubled, trebled and in some cases actually quadrupled. The ordinary shop is divided into two halves ; the overhanging roof is carried straight out about twenty feet and rests on pillars ; between these is a long platform, perhaps four feet from the ground, covered with much merchandise, and the proprietor sits cross-legged, smoking gravely among his wares. There is plenty of room between the front and back shops for customers to walk. The space between the platform of the front shop is often divided by a partition, thus forming two boxes, each about three feet square. The front is open, and inside you may see a Moslem, seated cross-legged, and surrounded by the implements of his trade, working with feverish energy. Sometimes they are divided into four tiny compartments, not unlike packing-cases ; in one you will find a shoemaker literally buried in shoes, another makes pots from clay, another

is beating metal, and a fourth busily engaged in weaving garters, using his bare feet as a loom. Imagine a British shopkeeper working in a shop three feet square, contented and happy, and considering one shilling to be excellent pay for twelve hours of continuous labour!

As we gaze in wonder at the industrious workers it is hard to realise that each dusky, be-turbaned figure is in all probability a wealthy individual. The Moslem may be a workman during the day, but once the sun has set he is transformed into a Mahommedan equivalent to a country gentleman.

He shuts up his shop at sunset and, lighting a cigarette, passes solemnly, and with much dignity, out of the bazaar to his estate upon the surrounding hills. His little wooden flat-roofed house is surrounded by a cool courtyard enclosed with wicker walls, its windows are latticed so that his wife may enjoy the air unseen; upon entering the wide doorway he becomes lord of all he surveys.

Though employed all day upon what one might call menial labour, he regards himself as a useful servant of Allah, and thereby never loses his natural dignity. It is a lesson that we Christians might well take to heart.

The centre of the market-place we found to be a perfect Hades of babel, noise, shouting and movement. Peasants from the country had early brought in their merchandise. Sacks of flour, potatoes, vegetables, barrows of fruit, grapes, peaches, pears, plums are jumbled together, but, above all, thousands upon thousands of bright purple damsons, that form with the flat-baked bread the staple food of the Bosnians, and which in olden days enjoyed a wonderful and universal reputation throughout Europe under the name of "Turkish plums." Heaped up into great pyramids, they lie upon every side, deep masses of rich colour. I remember once in Southern Spain seeing a somewhat similar sight. We were suffering a rather

THOUGH ENGAGED DURING THE DAY IN WEAVING GARTERS, HE WILL, IN ALL PROBABILITY, POSSESS A VERY COMFORTABLE ESTABLISHMENT UPON THE SLOPING HILLS. SARÁJEVO. (BOSNIA)

bad *auto panne* at a tiny little village called Jativa, between Valencia and Albacete, and in the market-place we passed between great pyramids of onions, snow-white ; they lay in thousands and thousands, heaped up in every direction, and their aroma was with us for weeks afterwards.

Beside their property stood the country peasants, shouting, protesting, recommending, arguing and defying every caste and race that these lands can boast. Mahommedan women struggle to pay for their purchases, to carry their baskets, and at the same time to keep a refractory veil up, lest nose or cheek might become exposed, to the great scandal of the whole Moslem race. Christian women and maidens, in baggy trousers and red fezzes, Jewish girls with provoking smiles, Jewish matrons in hideous garb, and great muscular *rayahs* elbow their way through the throng with an assurance that would, thirty years ago, have been promptly punished by annihilation. Bearded Moslems gravely survey their wares, while crafty Jews in long coats of brilliant colour, reaching to their heels, add even more colour to this dazzling kaleidoscope ; and amidst all this turmoil smart Austrian policemen, in dark green uniforms, wearing the red fez, carrying sword and revolver, are keeping a watchful eye around, as though conscious of being the one and only civiliser throughout the land.

The noise is incessant, everywhere are disputants, and, to add to the confusion, there seems to be only one pair of scales in Sarájevo. This precious article is hunted round the place as though it were a tender morsel thrown among a pack of wolves. It consists of an ordinary iron lever, slung by a hook from a wooden bar, and we followed its progress with interest. I could never quite make out, though I tried hard enough, whether anyone owned them or whether they were public property. Our attention was first called to their existence by hearing a frightful din,

quite drowning the other noises and originating in a small, but particularly dense circle of people near the centre of the market. Elbowing our way through the throng, we discovered that the trouble was apparently over a sack of flour ; the owner, a huge *rayah*, dressed in coarse white clothes, and a raw sheep-skin slung from his shoulders, was arguing violently with a crafty old Jew in a bright orange coat and white turban. Things had evidently reached a standstill when three men pushed their way into the circle ; two were carrying the scales, and the third, an old Moslem trader, appeared to be vainly protesting. Whether or not they had despoiled him of the scales, it was quite impossible to find out, as Bosniac is absolutely unintelligible—to us at least. Ignoring his protests, the two men fixed up the scales. Sliding the wooden bar through the iron ring, they dug the hooks into the sack, and, bending down, each got a shoulder under an end of the pole. Straightening themselves, they lifted the sack off the ground, sliding the weight along the scale till it balanced and then lowering the sack to the ground. The sack had hardly touched the ground before the scales were violently seized by two other men and, pursued by at least four others, they were rushed away to settle another dispute. A perfect furore raged round that unlucky pair of scales. Directly they were free they were pounced upon by half a dozen men, and became the possession, for the time being, of the strongest.

Again trouble arises, not from weight, but measure, and the angry and heated disputants adjourn to the yardstone in the portico of the great mosque. Altogether it is as picturesque a scene as can be imagined. The dark cool booths, the low roofs of red tiles, the white domes and minarets of the innumerable mosques, all go to form a fitting framework to the picture of life and colour in the square.

THE ČARČIJA. SARÁJEVO

We were doomed to come into somewhat violent contact with the supreme authority of Austria. It so happened that I had forgotten to warn Ken not to take photographs until I had obtained permission from the military Commandant, which I did during the morning. Again some little trouble. It seems that he had strolled by himself to the market-place, and finding much to his liking, had exposed film after film ; the climax came when, wishing to take a photo of the whole scene, making his offence particularly blatant by actually climbing the steps of the fountain in the centre of the square and standing upon a stone seat, he snapped a beautiful view of the surrounding town, including, as it was afterwards explained, the neighbouring hills, whose summits are surmounted by many a modern fortress. Ten seconds after his shutter had clicked he was under arrest, and two green-uniformed, red-fezzed guardians of the Dual Empire were endeavouring to explain that his presence was urgently required at the Commandant's office. As he did not, however, see the matter in exactly the same light, he refused to be marched off in custody and deprived of an innocent pleasure, so he deliberately sat down upon the stone seat. Luckily I had already obtained the necessary permit, and knowing that Ken's Scotch nature would impel him to run up against officious officials who might interfere, and to see those worthies to a warmer clime ere he budged an inch, I had hurried in search of him, and arrived in time to prevent serious trouble. Ken, it seems, had at that moment cheerfully offered to duck both officers in the fountain, and these worthies were consulting together as to the best way of dealing with this unique case. My appearance with the necessary permit instantly solved the difficulty. The officials, glancing at the signature, became at once all smiles. Ken, rather disappointed, grinned back at me, and we all parted excellent friends. The

officials, saluting smartly, hurried away to report proceedings.

Around the town, so a friend told us, is a ring of secret fortifications, and one is not permitted to leave the main road within a ten-mile radius, for the sentries have orders to shoot on sight. This is but one instance of the firm hand of the Government, and shows clearly how Austria is guarding her new possessions.

We thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Sarájevo. Apart from its historical connections and important position as capital of Bosnia, its nearness to the Serbian-Turkish frontier enhances its military importance considerably; its life and colour are so varied, and its position upon the base of an amphitheatre of grey mountains, at the foot of which is scattered a maze of Moslem villas with flat roofs, is delightful; and here and there graceful mosques rise from amidst the green verdure. Often of an evening we would climb upon the surrounding hills, sometimes passing the strange old Jewish cemetery, high up to a small pilgrimage shrine, from whose eminence one could look down upon the busy town far below, embracing the sweet slopes on either side of the stream. Across the flat plain the hills towards Travnik are silhouetted against the sunset, and to the left stretches the dark mass of the Ivan Planina. As the sun disappears in its bed of fire one hears the sharp boom of the cannon, and, almost before the hills have ceased throwing and multiplying the sound, a hundred different voices strike the ear—the plaintive call to prayer. It is a quaint scene that one sees, and as one descends through the narrow paths among the Moslem cottages one catches sight of many of the interiors. It is no uncommon thing to obtain a glimpse of a Moslem woman unveiled, as she attends to her housework. Yet an instant afterwards she has seized the nearest object—even a handful of straw—and buried her face in it.

THE HEART OF THE ČARČIJA, SARÁJEVO. (NOTE THE MOSLEM MOTHER AND CHILD. ALSO THE TURK UPON THE LEFT, WHO IS ENGAGED IN SERVING ROAST LAMB HOT)

"Here woman's voice is never heard; apart
And scarce permitted, guarded, veil'd, to move
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove;
For not unhappy in her master's love,
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast, no meaner passion shares."

The little girls are equally shy, and we found it almost impossible to obtain a photo of a group as they drew water in the picturesque pitchers at one of the many fountains.

Though not so common as around Jajce, the children's hair is often dyed a bright scarlet, and invariably the women's and children's finger-nails are stained a rich dark brown with *henna*.

The Mahommedan woman is generally believed, by Europe, to be a mindless, soulless slave, who exists only for her lord's pleasure, and who is at best but little removed from an animal. This is by no means the case in Bosnia. Polygamy is almost unknown; though the woman is practically cut off from the outside world, she, nevertheless, leads a happy existence; her whole life is wrapped up in her home; she devotes every minute she can spare from her housework to her children, who are, to her, "gifts from Allah." She is a healthy-minded creature, free from sickness; she knows no attractions other than her home; she delights in needlework, in embroidery; her world, in fact, is her husband, and her one desire is to make him happy, to bring peace and joy into his life. "The honest women are obedient, careful in the absence of their husbands for that God preserved them, by committing them to the care and protection of men," says the Koran. Unfaithfulness is unheard of, indeed, such a thing evokes a universal horror, and the guilty participants are cast out for ever by the relatives and friends.

A Serbish friend of ours, who spoke Bosniac at our request, asked one of the small maidens, in pretty baggy trousers of coloured print, with dyed red hair, and holding a coloured shawl over her head, if she could read or write. "No, no," she lisped, rather indignantly. "I am a Turkish girl." This illustrates best the ideas of the Moslem; the women, though honoured and cared for, have not the slightest education, a few words of the Koran being considered all sufficient: indeed, anything further would not be looked upon as quite the thing. The Moslem woman is first a mother, and secondly a housewife; she seldom even sees her future husband before marriage, which state she often enters upon before she is thirteen. She makes herself indispensable in her home, has no outside attractions or interests, is wrapped up entirely in her family; and they say that the Moslem home-life in Bosnia is purer and more genuine to-day than in many a Christian land.

On the occasion of the last visit Sheila and I paid to Sarájevo we had been unable to do any one of three things: first, to gain an entrance to the great mosque; secondly, to see the dancing dervishes perform; and thirdly, to journey eastward of Sarájevo, as we had dearly wished to do.

We were more fortunate this visit, for we had little difficulty in gaining admission into the great mosque, which may be visited at 2 p.m., that is, after the midday prayers are over. A Mahommedan priest takes one in charge and furnishes heelless slippers ere one steps upon the sacred matting, and it is noteworthy that it would be the gravest insult to uncover within the holy building. The interior is gorgeous, both in its design and colouring, which latter aims at a feeble conception of the Alhambra palace, or rather the Alcazar of Seville; the floor is of spotlessly clean light matting, and the walls are, like Jacob's coat, "of many colours." The design is Moresque;

A VEILED WOMAN ENGROSSED IN BUYING BREAD GAVE ME A CHANCE OF A GOOD SNAP-SHOT. (SARÁJEVO)

one of the two law pulpits, where the preacher squats upon a large cushion, is used by Arabic speakers only, and the other, Bosniac or Turkish; great framed texts from the Koran in gold, upon a background of black, are hung upon each wall, looking to the uninitiated like fantastic specimens of stenography. The roof is formed of domes blue and starred, the windows are upon the level of the floor and enclosed by heavy bars; two great imitation candles stand at one side, and beside them a third pulpit, up to which leads an enclosed flight of marble steps. We noticed that the Moslem was not above using electricity as a substitute for lamps and candles; even the minaret, that holy and sacred balcony, was encircled by a series of electric lamps that the despised infidels had produced. Altogether the effect is extremely pleasing and novel to the eye, breathing the essence of Moslem teaching—cleanliness.

Unlike the Christian, the Moslem never constructed his temple to strike wonder and awe into the soul of the believer—no huge interior of vaulted stone-work, no exquisite choir-stalls, no beautiful windows, no floor of cold stone, no echoing space, rather a series of little white churches, unimposing to the eye, but full of busy worshippers, and to us wonderful for the never-ceasing fanaticism that is ever uppermost in the daily life of the Moslem.

As to the dancing dervishes, whose performances we had wished to see, alas, they were no more! Every Friday, up to the last year, they had been a shining light in the Moslem world, and provided endless wonder and amusement to visitors who went to see them (at one krone a head). It was indeed time that the Government took the steps they did; for though originally the dervishes, fresh from the desert, had practised the strict tenets of their faith, of later years they had degenerated greatly, and it was only the odd shillings that had

induced them to rouse themselves on a Friday for the benefit of relieving the unbeliever of his superfluous cash. Thereupon the Government took a hand in the game, with the result that further religious fiascos were prevented.

I believe the little band still flourishes and practises the prescribed rites for the true believers—but not at a shilling a head !

A week or more we spent in Sarájevo, renewing our acquaintance with many familiar sights, enchanted by the constant change of colour and native life that is ever passing before the eye. We were fortunate enough to witness a large national gathering of Serbs one Saturday afternoon in the old market square. All the morning great crowds of Serbian peasantry had been pouring into the town from the surrounding country, and by one o'clock the market-place presented a scene of barbaric splendour. Never have I seen such gorgeous dresses as those worn by the women. It seemed almost an impossibility for one individual to crowd so much jewellery and gaudery upon her person. Many wore the prescribed baggy black trousers, tight at the ankles and swelling to alarming proportions towards the waist-line ; brilliant socks and picturesque leather shoes turned up *à la turc* at the toe ; others wore shirts and aprons of colours too varied to be adequately done justice to by my pen. But it was from the waist upwards that the effect became positively dazzling. I wonder how I can best begin to describe them, for they seem at first sight to be one indiscriminate blaze of gold and coloured silks.

One and all wore white open blouses with wide sleeves, surmounted by waistcoats, that would have made Joseph's traditional coat look drab and colourless, coming to two flat points in the front. Then came another waistcoat of green, blue, yellow or bright scarlet, plush or silk, heavily embroidered, with whole yards of gold and

LIFE IN SARÁJEVO

silver, and in many cases edged with fur; around the waist a splendid glittering belt, fastened by an enormous buckle of silver and gilt filigree-work. Upon their heads colour and variety ran riot; the hair, parted in the centre, lies in two long plaits interlaced with many curious coins, hanging like light armour over the forehead. Some, indeed, wore most brilliant handkerchiefs, and in addition a halo of flowers or tinsel; many sported weird-looking feathers in great quantities, whilst any odd space that happened to be left bare by oversight was hung with jewellery. Heavy filigree ear-rings hanging down to the shoulders, bracelets of the same kind, many three inches broad, from which hung coins and metal ornaments; necklaces, as many as seven or more; their fingers deep in rings; and, indeed, all over their bodies chains and pendants, medallions, and a thousand and one curious and bizarre ornaments. The hair, as I said before, is literally overflowing with glittering coins, ribbons, flowers and feathers, until it seems as though the great unwieldy head-dresses must overbalance. Those who had white skirts also wore underneath large white trousers tucked into rainbow-hued socks, and their faces, hard and Slavonic, with high cheek-bones, brown skins, and guttural harsh voices. As for the men, they were dressed alike in curiously shaped black trousers and white shirts, with a stiff lace-like collar, black waistcoats of the same heavy cloth trimmed with gold, bright sashes and heavy leathern belts, a knife handle or two, the same gorgeous socks and Turkish shoes; upon the head a white or red fez surrounded by a heavy white cloth in the form of a turban, or in many cases a large red turban itself. Like their women-folk, they displayed the same barbaric and ruthless love of display; every finger had its ring, some even two or three, and flowers bedecked their caps and hair. Indeed, they were a rough-looking and hardy crew, with broad chests and

manly looks as they stalked among the females, or conversed in groups. The whole market-place was filled with them; the Moslem was almost ousted from his place, being confined to a few stalls upon the outskirts of the crowd, and the blaze of life and colour was irresistible.

A noteworthy feature was the inferior position occupied by the woman; as in Montenegro, the labial salute takes place only between man and man, the women being allowed, as a special favour, to kiss the men's hands. Now and then, as a group of men is broken up, some gorgeous woman will timidly approach, and taking one of the men's hands press her lips reverently to its back, others following the custom. This curious tradition amused us for quite a time. Often a man would, while listening to the conversation of his companions, extend his hand to some gorgeous female who had approached. As though conscious of the inestimable favour that was being shown her, the lucky(?) woman would timidly hold it to her lips and then retire into obscurity, the envy of her less fortunate sisters.

Time after time we witnessed the same scene, a survival of a bygone age, one might fancy, but nevertheless a very common one, and one that made Sheila and Dorothy swear they would turn suffragists upon every occasion that they witnessed it.

Our main desire was to see the great dance that was supposed to be held at the old Serbian church, but which we found lonely and deserted. The thickest of the throng appeared to be gathered round the small archway of a house, labelled in strange letters "Han," and a little to the left of the great market; here half a dozen or more mounted policemen, armed with sword and revolver, were continuously riding through the thick of the throng, while on foot scores of Austria's smart watch-dogs also patrolled the crowd, for you must know that

GLITTERING BELTS, BRACELETS AND RINGS ADD SPLENDOUR TO THE ALREADY GORGEOUS EFFECT.
(SERBIAN WOMEN AT SARÁJEVO)

though the hope of the great Serb nation fell to the ground upon the bloody field of Kossovo, the descendants that to-day form the backbone of the Balkan States still cherish a fervent hope that one day another Dushan will arrive who will lead them to victory and materialise their constant dream of forming one great Serb kingdom. This hope Austria will never crush, and indeed, in fairness to her, it must be said that she has granted them every privilege in reason. Still, as she has found to her cost more than once, she can never expect to gain their loyal allegiance as subjects of a Catholic state. But I transgress.

The word *han* over the crowded archway suggested another form of the word *khan*, which throughout the Sultan's domains stands for "inn." As the people were continuously forcing their way through the narrow archway, we decided to follow their example and catch a glimpse of what might be taking place inside. The result proved how fortunate our resolution was. Ken volunteered to force a passage, and we followed in his wake, myself bringing up the rear. It *was* thick, not only the crowd, but the atmosphere, especially the latter. Once through the archway we found ourselves in a kind of large yard with a balcony upon each side one storey high. With difficulty we succeeded in reaching a staircase, and climbed up to the wooden balustrade. We now found ourselves gazing upon a scene, once viewed, never to be forgotten. I have seen many weird scenes, but never one more barbarous and gorgeous. The whole oblong courtyard below us was filled to overflowing with the glittering figures of men and women, and amidst the babel of noise there arose a wailing chant. Woman after woman, girl after girl took up the melancholy wail. (I cannot, even by the wildest stretch of imagination, call it singing.) Now and then a man would join in for a few moments, only to resign in favour of the gentler sex

after a short effort. It really was the most hideous attempt at music that one could imagine. Presently, as we looked more closely, we perceived that the apparently ceaseless movement had a definite object. A circle, principally composed of women, was being formed, and was slowly moving anti-clockwise, still keeping up the intolerable wailing. This we soon recognised as the commencement of the Serb dance, the *kollo*, the centre of the circle thus formed being solid, principally of men, drinking and shouting and becoming every minute slowly but surely more noisily drunk. They were quite a study in themselves. What wild-looking types they were, with their harsh throats bellowing coarse speech, their bare necks and chests and flushed brown faces. Now and then one would suffer his hand to be saluted by some splendid female and then fall upon the neck of some male friend, as is the custom amongst the votaries of Bacchus all the world over, sharing the same bottle until it had been ascertained by every known means that it was really and truly empty. There were no signs of Austrian policemen in here, nor Europeans, as we understand the term. We were the only strangers, and we drew back into the shadow of the balustrade to watch the heaving throng.

One man produced a hand-made wooden whistle, double pipes on one thick stem, and commenced to pipe forth an endless attempt at a tune, and almost instantly the wailing circle of shufflers commenced to dance. Their attempts to trip the light fantastic steps were most interesting and the earnestness displayed much to be commended. Looking closely, we were able at last to make out a recognised step : it was a kind of three-step run, mark time and back a step, then forward again ; men and women howled in unison, shuffling round the circle. Now and then a half-tipsy man would lurch through the ring, breaking the joined hands. Another

man produced a local apology for a mandoline and began to jingle forth a tuneless melody that set the men in his immediate vicinity marking time like the rest. The bedrooms of the *han* opened on to the balcony, which became crowded with the same folk, all eagerly watching the brilliant scene below; in fact, the air soon became positively and startlingly oppressive. We stood it as long as we could, for the spectacle held us enchanted, and then determined reluctantly to make our way out, pushing and shoving through the gorgeous merry throng till, to our relief, we gained the open street and could breathe in freedom again.

Sheila was anxious to obtain photos, but several of the local beauties had strong objection to this, while others, no less gorgeous, were quite anxious to be taken and for a few kronen gave us some splendid groups. We were instantly pounced upon by an Austrian official, who retired, however, with a disappointed salute upon the production of our permit, and after lingering a little while longer we returned to the hotel for tea, after enjoying a most enchanting afternoon, to talk and marvel over the fact that such a purely savage folk should exist to-day so near and yet so far from what we call our modern civilisation.

Upon our last visit to Sarájevo we had wished to journey eastwards as far as the Serbian-Turkish frontier, but had been warned that, for many reasons, it was not safe. Baedeker, in his 1905 edition, says, "Private carriages are not advisable, the diligence has a military escort." That was written only five short years ago, and to-day this country is virgin; forests, untrodden by man, cover the lower slopes of pathless grey mountains, many bleak and bare, broken by deep gorges wild and savage, far from all signs of civilisation—a land completely isolated and, as far as an automobile is concerned, untraversed.

Austria has at almost incredible cost planned and constructed a railway which is perhaps one of the most wonderful feats of engineering ever undertaken. She is deservedly proud of the fact, and offers every inducement to the tourist to avail himself of the opportunity of travelling by the only means possible through a land so utterly cut off from civilisation. The problem that faced us, as we laid our heads together, was to find if it were really possible to reach Višĕgrad, the last Bosnian town, with Mercédès, and even to struggle beyond it as far as Priboj, just within the Turkish frontier of Novi Pazar. The prospect that confronted us offered much promise of adventure, yet, at the same time, we felt that we should be attempting something that had never been done before, and in our small way might be aiding the great march of the automobile through the world, and gaining knowledge for the use of future generations of automobilists who might follow in our tyre-marks. There is no greater inducement to success than to be told by somebody that something is impossible; all the unsuspected feelings of aggression that have lain dormant for years seem to rise and urge one to demonstrate to the sage how idiotic his advice is. In the present instance, while we had been debating the subject, a resident friend we made told us that he had once got as far as Višĕgrad with his little car (a fact I still have my private opinion upon), but that *we* could not possibly get through. And as for the road to Novi Pazar, that was quite out of the question, never having even been attempted before. That clenched the matter, and with one accord we determined, come what might, to make a dash for that Serbian-Turkish frontier.

BAGGY BLACK TROWSERS SWELLING TO ALARMING PROPORTIONS.
(SERBIAN WOMEN, SARÁJEVO)

CHAPTER VI

OUR DASH FOR THE SERBIAN-TURKISH FRONTIER

EARLY START FROM SARÁJEVO—WILD SCENES—TABLE-LAND OF GLASINAC—ROGATICA—SEMEĆ-PLANINA—TERRIBLE ROAD—WITCH'S DEN UPON THE SUMMIT—STARINA NOVAC—ROUGH DESCENT—TROUBLE WITH HORSES—TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO VIŠEGRAD—DESCRIPTION OF AUSTRIA'S WONDERFUL RAILWAY—PLANS FOR THE MORROW.

IT was early morning as we sailed out of Sarájevo, our faces turned towards romantic Serbia, ready for anything that might await us, and confident that Mercédès would carry us through whatever we should be called upon to face. The town was just beginning to awake, the air was delightfully fresh and blew keenly in our faces as we passed beside the native quarter and followed the left bank of the Mitialchka, which here flows through a deep gorge edged with massive hills; far up upon the opposite side we can see the new railway to the frontier, "the most wonderful line in the world," as Austria loves to style it, cut in the sloping rock. Passing through a rocky tunnel, we follow the windings of the gorge; upon every peak we espy an ugly-looking fort, from which Austrian eyes are watching jealously and doubtless following us with field-glasses, lest we should dare to photograph their strongholds. About a mile from the left, and turning into it, the road commenced to

climb steeply, and by its aid mounts serpentinely upwards till it emerges again into the main valley, and we find we are upon the same level as the railway, on the other side, and up which we had gazed. We were now high above the silvery stream and out of sight of the forts, so I ventured to take my first photo.

Cut in the slanting precipice of bleak grey, the road climbs swiftly, till we can actually look down upon the shining rails, as we can upon the stream; the scenery is becoming wilder and wilder, bleak rocks, veritable giants, tower up on every side, and before us stretch purple ranges of other peaks far into the distance. With a sharp elbow turn the road climbs again quickly in the opposite direction, and ere it reaches the summit we look for the last time upon the glinting rails and they are finally lost to view. The few peasants that we encountered, picturesque figures, Moslem and Orthodox, in fez and turban, stared at us in evident astonishment, while their animals, mules for the most part, unaccustomed to the sight of an auto, endeavoured to bolt the instant we came into view, and were only restrained by their owners with difficulty. Often, indeed, we had to stop the engine before they could be induced to pass.

Once over the first summit we are some thousand feet above Sarájevo; as we pass each little wooden house, with its big overhanging roof, the occupants, hearing Mercédès, rush helter-skelter to the doorway, hats are doffed and salutes made and returned. The range of hills before us is broken only by one very deep and narrow gorge, just of sufficient width to allow passage for the stream far below, whilst the road skirts the very edge of the precipice as it winds its way into the heart of the mountains. We are now descending, first by zigzags, and then by a long slope hewn out of the rock.

Crossing a little bridge, we have a short ascent, passing through a beautiful, though small ravine, where the road

is rather narrow and where, naturally, we meet a couple of oxen waggons bringing heavy loads of timber, also a number of stupid mules laden with hay. Throughout Bosnia the mules carrying hay present a very curious and at the same time somewhat ludicrous sight; at first view one imagines that a haystack is moving of its own accord along the road, until one perceives the head of a mule protruding from the centre of the stack. That is all that one is permitted to see of the animal, for the hay reaches down to the ground upon either side, and also behind him. When the beast gets abreast of the car the effect is decidedly heightened, for, to all appearances, the haystack suddenly goes raving mad, and shies sideways, chasing its venerable owner off the road, often squashing him flat between it and the rocky wall, and when well jammed in that position the mule's head will appear round the stack, with one ear thrown forward and the other laid back flat. In the present instance the three haystacks danced past Mercédès in a very creditable manner, their red-turbaned attendants a trifle ahead, so that no damage was done.

At the end of the valley lies Bastrik, a small village where two roads diverge; both go to Rogatica, halfway to Višegrad, by different ways. Acting upon our military survey map, we had already decided to go by one and return by the other, so turned to the left, commencing the climb over the Romanja Planina, some four thousand five hundred feet above the sea-level. Sharply we mount by the aid of a small rocky valley, and upon reaching the end obtain a taste of the wondrous changes that a few miles bring in this strange land, for we find ourselves amidst scenery of quite a different character. Gone were the barren mountains of black-grey rocks, the fearsome gorges, and savage landscape. We were gazing upon one of the most beautiful views that Tirol or Switzerland might envy. Upon either side a

great forest of pines and firs swelled away far into the distance, and before us stretched the Romanja, a rugged mountain range not unlike the Dolomites in formation, of the same ruddy rocks, the strata perpendicular, but to dispel that idea there stretched upon the jagged summit a line of single firs, silhouetted against the sky of deep blue. It was indeed a glimpse of Switzerland at her best, peaceful and silent. The very air is filled with the sweet smell of the pines, and the ground strewn with fir-cones and covered with bracken and moss, intensely restful after what we had just passed through. We were half disappointed at not hearing the musical sound of the cattle-bells in the distance. Ever climbing, the road passes through a tiny village called, I think, Mokro, lost amidst its beautiful surroundings. It is curious to see here the wild figures ; they seem out of place upon such a landscape, and if ever painter were to picture them in such a scene his critics would undoubtedly slate him right and left for producing so incongruous a work.

As the last little hut is passed we commence the ascent proper, mounting in zigzags ever upwards ; the road, though well graded, is covered here and there with innumerable sharp loose stones that clatter from beneath the wheels and shake Mercédès with a nasty jar much too often, giving us a mild taste of what is to follow. Backwards and forwards we climb steadily, and between the pines we can see the land we have lately left falling farther and farther beneath us, while the Dolomites grow every moment nearer. Here and there the road's surface is shocking, and we tremble for the new tyres with which we had lately shod Mercédès. Till now we had found no particular difficulty, save, indeed, the execrable condition of many parts of the road. Still amidst the thick firs, the road attains the summit and Han ha Romanja, a small inn opposite a fortified camp—another

GLITTERING DRESSES OF THE SERBIAN WOMEN AT SARÁJEVO. (BOSNIA)

reminder of Austria's mode of "moral" civilisation, for she hides within her velvet glove an iron hand for the lawless, who only a year or more ago patrolled these parts. The main telegraph wire from Vienna to Constantinople passes by here, and, in addition, the extensive range of country commanded by this position renders it a place of considerable importance. During the last insurrection the garrison passed many an anxious day ere they were relieved.

Traffic, luckily, was seldom encountered; here and there we espied a native herdsman, with white baggy trousers, long white jacket and white shirt, coloured sash, heavy belt and knives, and red turban, not unlike a mild form of Albanian. Wild-looking figures they were as we caught a momentary glimpse of them between the trees.

Before descending, our way leads for some ten miles across the lofty plains of Glasinac, down to which it descends some seven hundred feet or more by an easy, though narrow road, possessing a bad surface of stones and loose earth. As we descend we can see the whole plateau spread out below us, a barren waste, flat as the paper I write upon, ending in the distance in a range of low grey hills. Scarcely a tree is to be seen, only coarse grass and grazing ground, where large herds of sheep and goats, and even horses, are seen peacefully feeding.

The scene has again changed, with that startling suddenness so peculiar to this land, and to all intents and purposes we might be upon the immense plains of Old Castile, or upon those of Don Quixote's native home.

This is the great tableland of Glasinac, and as one gazes at the wide expanse of desolation, devoid of habitation, it is hard, almost impossible, to realise that in the dawn of history one of the most frequented of highways crossed this plain. To-day the only reminder of its former greatness are the numerous piles of stones,

here and there, that mark the resting-place of a forgotten people. The Roman eagle has been carried over this road, the savage Avars and Slavs have contested this ground; for untold centuries successive armies have passed by, tramping away the remnants of former ages till they themselves lapsed into death and their dust was distributed to the four winds of heaven. Where are the towns and villages now? Where is the lusty life that once echoed here? And in their place—graves, hundreds upon hundreds of graves: prehistoric cairns of rough stones; huge sarcophagi, shielding the dead of that strange faith, the Bogomile, from the attack of wolves; Turkish graves so ancient in design that their very form has all but crumbled away—a land of the dead. Fifteen hundred, nay, almost two thousand years have passed since this immense plain gave up its life and relapsed into what we now see.

Many races of human beings like ourselves once lived here—loving, hating, fighting and dying, till time blotted out their names, and even their very existence is forgotten.

A narrow road cuts straight across the flat surface, and we enjoyed quite a fair spin, the peasants running a considerable distance to catch a nearer glimpse of Mercédès, and the few children that we met, contrary to our experience of children all the world over, actually rushing away from us with all their might and main.

A low pyramid-shaped hill lay to our right, surmounted by a stone obelisk. We did not stop to examine it as we should have wished, knowing that it must be one of the many emblems to Austria's soldiers who fell here not so very long ago, when Turkey reluctantly relinquished another of her northern possessions.

At the end of this plain the road ascends gently over the low hills, or, rather, immense mounds, and one can look back at the fir-clad Dolomites, far away upon the

THE OBLONG COURTYARD BELOW WAS ONE MASS OF SPARKLING COLOUR.
(SERBIAN FÊTE AT SARÁJEVO)

horizon. We now commence a long descent of some one thousand five hundred feet to Rogatica. The road, still narrow and possessing a loose surface, winds downwards in easy curves; at first it is cut slanting on the precipice edge of the cliff, and we enjoy a fine panorama of mountains: a purple haze in the distance where we knew Serbia must lie, and Turkey jealously clinging, with the grip of a drowning man, to its last western province, the Sandjak of Novi Pazar.

In due course we reached Rogatica, a model little Turkish village of some two thousand inhabitants, possessing many graceful mosques, its streets alive with the warmth and colour of the East, and its bazaar the same enchanting, but now very familiar pageant of Moslem life.

Rogatica is, in fact, "Tshelebi Bazar" of the Moslem, and renowned throughout all Islam; it is still to a certain extent a sacred city, and the numerous cupolas and minarets portend more than the traveller realises. The place has always had a reputation for fanaticism and intolerance, and so strict are the Moslems that during *Ramadan* the elders watch in the cafés to see that none of the Faithful smoke and to inflict punishment upon any delinquent. Rogatica is a Moslem stronghold, and not the least remarkable fact is that the Christian community, which numbers only about ten per cent of the total inhabitants, should live upon such good terms and in such security. Rogatica is the most conservative town in Bosnia, and several great families have their origin here; to-day many of its principal men are Begs, and there resides in the neighbourhood the famous family of Sokolovitsh, whose distinguished ancestor in the fifteenth century, Mehemmet-Beg Sokolovitsh, one of the founders of Sarájevo, built the beautiful bridge that we shall see at Višegrad.

Is there any wonder that our modern appearance

caused quite a sensation in sleepy little Rogatica? The Moslem forgot his tolerant indifference to the infidel and jostled and shoved equally with his Orthodox brother to see us crawl past. We undoubtedly roused the village as it had never been roused since the time when it was wrested from its Sultan, and so alarming was the attention we attracted that we passed through without halting, leaving it humming like an overturned hive of bees.

As we were only twenty-six miles from Višĕgrad, we counted ourselves nearly there, in happy ignorance of the fact that between us and our destination for the night there stretches the great mass of the Semeć Planina, a range of mountains some four thousand three hundred feet in height, over whose summit we must find a way. In the Alps the height would be nothing, quite an easy climb, viz. the Brenner, Mendle, Pillon and others, but here we were to learn different. There is no grand road engineered by Austria for her military purposes; the road that faced us was positively appalling, its only object seeming to be to find as direct and perpendicular a way as possible up the hill and to pick out the most dangerous and steepest parts. I think that we may be said to have had as much experience of Alpine ascents *en auto* as most people, but for absolute barbarity of treatment and ruthless contempt of gradation the Semeć is unequalled. In addition, the road was covered with sharp loose stones, thousands upon thousands, and crossed by watercourses innumerable. The gradient is positively appalling, indeed, for nearly two miles it was often between twenty-five and thirty per cent, and this in addition to a surface incredible in its uncouth roughness. What this road has once been I do not know, but evidently the advent of the railway has meant the utter neglect of the simplest attempt at reparation.

It took Mercédès all her 70 h.p. to thunder up the climb even on her "first," the stones scattering with many a

A SERBIAN BEAUTY

CAUGHT BY THE CAMERA ERE SHE COULD HIDE HER FACE

A MOSLEM PORTER OF THE ČARČIJA

(SARÁJEVO, BOSNIA)

shuddering jar from beneath the wheels. The scenery is wild and deeply wooded, ruddy rocks overrun with verdure. Very quickly we lost sight of the valley; indeed, we were too intent upon the astounding road to have time to notice much else. We were literally climbing " upon our hands and knees " up the treacherous path. In time, a long time it seemed, we gained the summit, a small cluster of houses, and at the door of one appeared a figure so wild and queer that we stopped Mercédès in order to make its closer acquaintance. We found the cottage was a kind of savage café, if I may use that expression, run by the figure that had caught our eye. It proved to be an old woman, the most perfect example of a witch I have ever seen. She must have been well over ninety years of age, her face covered with wrinkled, brown, parchment-like skin, her snow-white hair, wonderfully abundant, in two long, silky plaits, reaching below her waist; a coloured handkerchief bound her brow, holding a small spray of curious dried leaves in her hair. She wore the country dress of thick white cloth, made in one piece, from her bare neck down to her knees, and open at the breast, the short sleeves leaving exposed a pair of skinny arms and claw-like hands; and round her waist a girdle of light rope. Altogether, she looked as wild a witch as one could find in real life, or fiction, for the matter of that.

Her hovel was to match, a small white hut, composed of one square room, with a big overhanging roof of blackened wood, the interior so dark that at first we could scarcely see. Presently we made out the form of a smouldering fire in the centre; the hut was filled with wood-smoke that hurt our throats and made our eyes smart and water. A small hole in the roof gave the only means of egress to the suffocating smoke, very similar to many a crofter's hut in the Highlands, where the peat smoke, as in the present case, acts as a germ-destroyer,

and alone is responsible for the general health, where a modern chimney would deprive the occupants of this very valuable disinfectant. Every object in the interior glistened as thick as though it had been tarred, for the smoke from the fire had in years coated everything inches deep.

The old witch was now squatting over the fire roasting coffee, occasionally administering to the embers a violent poke, that sent up a quick flame to illuminate the darkness for a second or two, and light up her wizened face and still bright eyes. What a perfect picture she was, as she huddled over the fire, murmuring incantations over the brown beans! Exactly the personified type of many a childish tale dear to our hearts, and for that matter in many a classic story, she was the ideal type sought by novelists for generations.

Nothing could induce the old witch to leave the fire, and our endeavours to explain the nature of photography were hardly a success, so we were reluctantly compelled to tear ourselves away. What a history that old woman could tell would she but speak, of many a dark deed performed by the lawless bands of robbers who infested this spot up till a few years ago; of many a helpless traveller murdered as he passed and buried at dusk; of many a fierce carousal and savage division of spoil. Strange thoughts that old witch conjured up as she leant over the fire, watching us with her bright eyes that reflected the firelight, till it seemed as though a wolf was watching us from out the darkness as we slowly made our way into the pure air.

A Serbish friend told me of a favourite legend that connects this same spot with the name of Starina Novak, a Serbish hero, who is supposed to have lived in the days of the first Turkish invasion. He gained a wondrous reputation for reckless bravery, fighting incessantly against the Moslem, performing prodigious feats of valour

AFTER MUCH SCHEMING I SUCCEEDED IN CATCHING A JUVENILE GROUP AT THE FOUNTAINS.
(SARÁJEVO)

that to-day form the brilliant foreground of many a folk-song and verse sung to the tuneless strumming of the melancholy *gusla*.

"The Planina was my all,
My country, and my worldly means;
It gives me and my robber friends
Our food, and clothes, and all we need.
For precious booty do I capture,
And skilfully, I flee my foe;
I shrink from nothing, dare the worst,
Our Creator, God, alone I fear."

I would have given much to have known more about this lonely man, so fierce an upholder of the Cross, so savage a foe of the Crescent.

I remember reading in some old book of travel, the name of which I have, alas, forgotten, how a peasant told a traveller that during the winter upon these hills, when the snow lay deep upon the ground, he and his family, huddled round the fire in their cottage, could see the muzzles of the wolves pressed against the glass of the windows, and the firelight was reflected by scores of hungry eyes. That I remember well, but it was not until now that I realised its full significance. Bears too are not unknown, but in greatly reduced numbers compared to wolves. Indeed, the Semeć is a wild spot, and it is not good to linger too long upon this frontier hill.

One of the peculiarities of these mountain passes is the fact that one never seems to reach the summit. You may climb and climb, and finally cap the top, only to descend for a little way, and then ascend again and again, till at last one comes to the final descent into the valley.

So we found in the present instance; we passed, or rather seemed to be passing, over a series of stiff hills, deeply wooded, the road often a mere track of stones, climbing and descending without rest, till finally we came to the commencement of the big drop to Višegrad. That *was* a hill—three thousand feet sheer drop. Don't smile,

oh superior reader, who has made the passes of the Alps, and to whom the nine thousand two hundred feet of the Stelvio, the gradient of the Splugen and others are as nothing, for ye little know what this path over the Semeć means! What think you of a road standing nearly on end, and so narrow and rutty, so stony and broken that you can never get a run at it if you would. Backwards and forwards it goes, turn succeeding turn, winding amidst the thick firs, and as we come to the first of the zigzags we are treated to a gorgeous panorama that for a minute drives even the nightmare of the road out of our minds, and we think only of what nature has spread out before us. We are gazing across a peaceful valley at the mountains of Serbia, range after range, coloured from the deepest red to the softest purple. To the right, far in the distance, stretches a further range of mountains, equally wild, coloured a deep mauve, softened by the lightest touch of the refining hand of distance; that is Turkey, where the green flag of the Crescent waves to-day as it did over this same land but thirty years before.

The descent to Višĕgrad is very beautiful, though the road is atrocious, steep and in a shocking condition. A drop of a thousand feet through the pines brings us to a short plateau that juts out from the mountain range, and after passing a few huts of the meanest description, we have a small climb, till, on reaching the top, we are looking down upon Višĕgrad itself, a small cluster of white specks upon the banks of a tiny river, two thousand feet almost directly beneath us.

It was here that we found the road blocked by an enormous waggon-load of timber, standing in the very centre of our path. Luckily, it was rather upon a slant, yet it took our united efforts to move it sufficiently to allow of Mercédès just scraping between it and the precipice edge. Turn upon turn, zig after zag, till we

VIŠÉGRAD NESTLES BENEATH THE SHADOW OF SERBIA, 3,500 FEET BENEATH

lost count of those we had passed. About half-way down, whilst descending a long zig, and leaning back in our seats imagining we might enjoy a minute's rest, the off back tyre exploded with a tremendous bang, and we had the pleasurable prospect of filling a new cover. It was almost pitiable to surrender a new tyre to the merciless treatment of the road, and we groaned in unison at the long line of cruel stones, extending as far as we could see. Again upon our way, we continued the endless descent, the white specks far below resolving themselves into a pretty little white-housed town and the silvery streak of silk into a flowing stream.

At one spot where the trees are particularly thick, and the road has selected for taking an extra sharp turn, we came with startling suddenness upon a line of timber waggons standing before a small inn. Of course there was no one near the horses, an auto being the very last thing to be expected. In much less time than it takes to write the scene was turned into a perfect pandemonium of noise and confusion ; each horse endeavoured to bolt, those in pairs luckily selecting opposite directions. Nose-bags were flung unceremoniously to the four winds of heaven, while from out of the inn poured the drivers, shouting and cursing in a very forcible manner. They were a wild-looking crew, and expressed their opinions in fitting language and gestures as they tried to quieten their animals. We had come upon the first pair of horses almost before we realised the danger, but I managed to pull up Mercédès in time. Seeing the trouble, I slipped in the reverse, and opening the throttle, we shot back round the corner and stopped the engine. It was done in an instant, but not before panic had gripped the whole procession. Gradually the rough drivers quietened their animals, and we got past at last, sliding down upon our brakes, the men endeavouring to salute as they struggled with their charges. We were exceedingly glad

to have come out of the trouble so easily, for once or twice things looked rather ugly.

Višĕgrad possesses a beautiful memento of Turkish days, an exquisite stone bridge of eleven perfect arches gradually diminishing from the centre, and built by that famous Vizier Sokolovitsh, in the year 1571. Though nearly three hundred and forty years have passed, it is as perfect to-day as if finished but yesterday, and forms one of the most beautiful examples of acknowledged Moslem art extant.

Crossing over its massive length, we find ourselves precipitated into the heart of Višĕgrad, Austria's largest town east of Sarájevo, within ten miles of Serbia and thirty miles of Turkey. To say we caused a stir as we emerged from the bridge would be to put the matter far too mildly. I think it would be no exaggeration to say that every soul in Višĕgrad, Moslem, Orthodox and Catholic, turned out to welcome us, and in the centre of a compressed crowd of excited medieval figures we were conducted to the only hotel in the town and, with our motley escort, arrived before its quiet door with a rush, filling the narrow street to suffocation, and sweeping the proprietor and his minions from their own doorstep by sheer weight of numbers. Rooms were found, but for Mercédès there remained only the open street. Strange brown faces surrounded us, red fezzes and red turbans, heavy Slavonic features, grave, bearded Moslems, rough *rayahs*, Austrian officials, Greek priests and a hundred and one curious varieties, all eager to view us and to touch Mercédès.

"*Woher kommt der Herr Schauffen?*" asked those proud of their German. "From England, from England." They caught up the words, which were quickly flashed round in Magyar, Serbish, Russian and Turkish, and so they welcomed the first Englanders to reach Višĕgrad by car. Beyond, towards Turkey, no automobile

ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MONUMENTS OF BOSNIA: VIZIER SOKOLOVITSH'S BRIDGE AT VIŠĚGRAD

had ever penetrated, and if Mercédès forced her way she would have the honour of pioneering, as she had done in a few parts of Europe before. So Mercédès stood in the street all the night through, her curtains lowered, the centre till dusk of a large and varied crowd of natives. Luckily one portion of the hotel proved to be the post office, and a sentry, with loaded gun and fixed bayonet, patrolled the street ; an officer was good enough to give orders for the man to guard the car till daybreak, and so set our minds at rest.

Austria's wonderful railway passes through Višegrad, the one we had bid good-bye to soon after leaving Sarájevo, and we heard wonderful tales of how the prospectors had often to be lowered by ropes in order to mark out the route. Traffic on this single line is meagre in the extreme, and the annual proceeds often do not pay for the coal. What, then, is the object of this expensive line that comes to a full stop on the frontier and is, perhaps, a hundred miles from the nearest centre of communication ? As may be guessed, it is certainly not for the benefit of the few tourists who patronise it, or even for the long loads of timber that constantly pass down the line ; it is, in fact, another and visible sign of the active mind at the head of affairs of the Dual Empire, a great scheme by which Austria may, from a second and important military post, invade Serbia and flood that country with troops at the shortest possible notice. To march across the flat plains of Hungary down the Danube to Belgrade offers no serious obstacle, but between Sarájevo and Serbia lies the difficult and wild country we have crossed. Now Austria can, in seven hours, or even less, transport train after train load of men and guns and dump them down upon the threshold of Serbia, thus compressing that unhappy land between her two forces much as a lemon is squeezed.

Guide-books are eloquent in their descriptions of the

railway—which, by the way, was only completed last year—and totally neglect the road, far exceeding the iron rails both in beauty and hazardous passage. The spot where the rails touch the frontier there is no means of reaching save by their aid, for, over the last three miles, no attempt at a road of any description has been made. We had heard so much of this wonderful terminus upon the borderland of Serbia that we were all anxious to make the hour's journey that the train from Višĕgrad takes to reach the frontier. There are but two trains a day—so said the proprietor of the hotel, who, luckily, spoke excellent German—one leaving at 5.30 in the morning, returning at 7.30, and giving twelve minutes on the frontier, the other leaving in the evening at 6.30 and getting back at 9.30 p.m. It was exceedingly awkward, for we had set aside the morrow for our attempt to reach Turkey, twenty-five miles away, returning to sleep at Višĕgrad ; however, we determined to make a special effort and do the double journey, by taking the 5.30 a.m. train and returning for breakfast.

We dined sumptuously off chickens, caught and cooked upon our arrival, and also a local attempt at an omelette, a kind of remote distant relation to that excellent dish *à la français*, but, nevertheless, very appetising and welcome, for save our light lunch by the roadside, we had tasted nothing since seven that morning. We retired early, but not until we had sallied out for a little fresh night air ; the sky was overcast with clouds, but our host held out hopes of good weather for the morrow.

Mercédès stood silent in the deserted street, resting after her journey and gathering fresh energy for the unknown trials in store for her. The sentry saluted smartly, and was induced by means familiar all the world over to take a special interest in her welfare till morning. With a last look at the cloudy sky we bid good night to our attentive host and retired for the night.

WHERE THE RAILS END THERE COMMENCES SERBIA

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST AUTO EAST OF VIŠEGRAD

UP WITH THE SUN—TAKE TRAIN—THE SERBIAN FRONTIER—RETURN TO VIŠEGRAD—START IN MERCÉDÈS—TERRIBLE ROAD—OUR GOAL ATTAINED—MILITARY FRONTIER OF OVAC—TURKS REFUSE ENTRY—UNABLE TO REACH PRIBOJ—UPON TURKISH SOIL—VIŠEGRAD AGAIN—TROUBLE WITH BENZINE—MORNING BREAKS STORMY, START TO RETURN—OVER THE SEMEĆ—ROGATICA—LOSE OUR WAY—FIGHTING THE STORM—SAVAGE CLIMB—DESOLATION—REACH SARÁJEVO AND ILIDŽE.

THE light was faintly silhouetting the black mass of the hills as we were roused next morning by a sleepy-eyed porter, who reluctantly admitted his ability to make coffee, but shuddered at the mention of tea. However, he boiled some water, and by the help of our own tea-caddy Sheila and Dorothy were able to enjoy their favourite beverage. It was quite light as we left the hotel under the guidance of the still sleepy porter, who yawned us to the station and, sinking upon the nearest box, drowsily watched us embark upon the train in waiting.

For the first half-hour or so the scenery presents little worthy of notice, the train passing through a series of valleys by means of tunnels ; to us the chief interest lay in the few glimpses of the road, the one we should traverse later in the day, which follows the train for some seven

miles to a point where the latter heads straight into the mouth of a great gorge. The road that we saw appeared to be seized with the most insane desire to make its own way as difficult and uneasy as possible, instead of following the railway upon the level ; it would, for no apparent reason, deliberately rush up a steep hill and mount at a ridiculous angle for half a mile or so only to come tumbling headlong down once more to the level of the rails. Again and again this would occur, and each time we became more disgusted with it, until at last we were positively talking to it as one would talk to a naughty child and endeavouring to shame it into something like a feeling of self-respect. But all in vain ; for it would suddenly vanish altogether in the middle of one of our soliloquies only to reappear quite unexpectedly upon the opposite side, as we emerged from a tunnel, thus occasioning us another well-meant effort to point out to it the error of its ways and the disgrace its behaviour was occasioning to every self-respecting road in the Balkans.

Those who travel only by trains know little of the country through which they pass, and just as little of the lives of the people. Where the train halts, there one will always find civilisation of a kind. It is only where the train is conspicuous by its absence that one may truly glean a knowledge of the life and customs as they exist to-day, just as they did three hundred years ago.

After stopping at a little station, the train reaches the three-mile gorge to Serbia. We did not see the beauty of this spot till we passed by later in Mercédès. We bid good-bye to the wayward road, which here turned off to the right, and we could see it, covered deep in stones and mud, disappearing into a wooded valley. The few miles that remained to the train are the cream of the journey ; the gorge itself wends its way through the heart of the mountain in a long serpentine track, back-

MERCÉDÈS PIONEERING. (EN ROUTE FOR THE SERBIAN-TURKISH FRONTIER)

wards and forwards ; while the train, disdaining such a long and easy means of progression, makes a dead straight line, thus traversing the gorge time after time, passing through the intervening rock by means of tunnels and crossing the torrent by iron spans. It is a wonderful journey, that short passage, and brings to the mind more vividly than anything else the *raison d'être* of a railway through such a country. One can almost picture the train-loads of troops, one after another, dashing through the tunnels, over the roaring stream and into the tunnel again, all eager to add yet another land to the dozen or so countries that go to make up the Dual Empire.

The railway leaves the gorges as abruptly as it enters them, and proceeds along a small valley completely encircled by mountains. At the far end we reach Vardiste, the frontier. Twelve minutes are left to us in which to make our first acquaintance of Serbia. This terminus truly justified its definition, if ever one did, for the lines were carried straight till they ended in the bare rock of Serbia. There is nothing of interest in the station save the curious dress of many of the peasants waiting to embark on the train.

Where the railway ends, there Serbia commences, a mass of dark bleak mountains portrayed against the rising sun ; upon the summit of the nearest hill was a little round white house with a big circular pointed roof overhanging, supported by pillars. A flagstaff stood a little to the left, and we could see the outlines of two figures, with guns and bayonets, pacing to and fro. This was the frontier guard of Serbia ; we should have liked to have climbed up to it, but the shrill whistle of the engine warned us that we were no longer under the indulgent hand of Mercédès, but luckless travellers in the grip of the railway time-table. As we steamed out of the modern little station we took a last look at the black rocks shivering in the cold breeze. We were glad

to have seen this spot, short as our visit was, a spot that one day may be the scene of bitter strife, and to which the eyes of Europe may be drawn. There was nothing of interest to relate in our return journey, and eight o'clock saw us seated in our rooms enjoying a second and more substantial breakfast and eager for our run to Turkey.

Meanwhile Rodgers, finding that the almost new tyre that had burst the previous day had only a small split in the canvas, had put a heavy gaiter inside and a repaired tube and placed the cover back on the car; for anything that would hold was good enough for these tracks. As he was adding the last touches we strolled out to gain an idea of Višĕgrad. This is a typical Turkish town, having little of interest above its neighbours save in the possession of Vizier Sokolovitsh's bridge. As we had caught but a momentary glimpse of it last evening we were anxious to review it again. It is indeed a beautiful piece of work and one that any man to-day might well be proud of designing. It is built entirely of stone, massive, but to a degree so beautiful that its great bulk is softened. The eleven arches are Gothic in design, the central one supporting the highest part of the bridge and five others diminishing to either shore.

Some twelve years ago the Drina suffered from a serious flood, the water rising so high that it rushed over the beautiful old bridge, doing much serious damage, and at the same time sweeping away some one hundred and sixty houses upon either bank. The bridge was repaired with the greatest care and to-day stands out in all its pristine beauty. So solid and firm does it appear that there has sprung up a Slav proverb which says, "*Ostade kao ishoupria na Vichesgrad,*" meaning "as firm as the bridge of Višĕgrad," and often used to demonstrate a man's word or his friendship.

There is a legend, relating to the original construction

WE ARE GAZING UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF SERBIA AND TURKEY. (TERRA INCOGNITA. EAST OF VIŠEGRAD)

of the bridge, to the effect that upon its final completion it was in grave danger of falling down. After much thought and consultation the architect and elders of Višĕgrad determined that it was owing to the displeasure of the Vila, or wood-fairy, and as a remedy decided to appease her fury by walling up a pair of lovers in the foundation of one of the pillars.

Fortunately the lovers obtained word of this resolution, for they instantly fled and, so the legend relates, lived happy ever after in a cave near Sarájevo. The legend ends abruptly here, and says nothing as to what was done to restore the Vila to good temper; probably another pair of lovers, more public-spirited, were found, or else a child was sacrificed.

It is a curious superstition, this walling-up of lovers or children, and one that has eaten deep into the minds of the people. Almost every bridge in Bosnia has the same grim story attached to it; the bridge of Konitza and the old Dream Bridge of Mostar, for example, each possesses a similar legend.

At the town end of the bridge a cattle fair was in progress; the scene was very gay and the country dresses exceedingly bright and picturesque.

Our first impression, upon returning to the hotel, was that the little building must be on fire, because of the eager crowd congregated before it in the street. Turk and Orthodox, fezzed and turbaned, carters, porters and loafers thronged together. Even a few veiled women halted timidly upon the outskirts of the crowd, endeavouring to catch a glimpse, till they caught their lord and master's eye instead and hurried quickly away. The centre of the disturbance proved to be the imperturbable Rodgers, who had backed Mercédès to the door and was adding the finishing touches with loving care, amidst the open-mouthed attentions of the crowd. The news had spread that the monster *auto* from far-off England, only

a misty outline to these lonely exiles, to whom Sarájevo summed up the greatest conception of "town," was going to Priboj, in Turkey. They wished to see it start, and so gain renown among their less fortunate neighbours. Two policemen gallantly cleared a path to Mercédès, and during a silence, broken only by the deep breathing of the crowd, we took our places—Dorothy and Ken in the tonneau, Sheila beside me, and Rodgers, of course, at her feet. The sound of the engine was enough to clear a space in front of us, and amidst the waving of hands and caps we had a hearty send-off, as we glided from the hotel door. The road was lined by the quaint characters, who grinned and bowed and showered gutturals at us, which might have been kind wishes, for all we knew.

Crossing a wooden bridge, we turn to the left, and as we pass the last little house and the remainder of the farewell crowd we commence a break-neck ascent over the most appalling stones I have ever seen, and our first step into *terra incognita* is taken. Very soon the road emerges from the trees and we look down upon the shining rails of the railway. For some distance the road is cut in the slope of the mountain ; but, what is worse, the whole ground is composed of loose earth, and this is continually falling on to the road, just as pieces of the road, at the precipice edge, have developed the comforting art of breaking off and dropping into space in a manner hardly pleasing to the nerves. Indeed, the whole road here was horrible, stony and rutty, and in many places actually unsafe. I am not ashamed to say that I was heartily glad when we had finished that portion of the drive. It is all very well when seated in a comfortable arm-chair before a good fire to think over one's journeys ; one forgets the odd moments of excitement when for seconds on end it is touch-and-go. Still in tours such as these the good outweighs the bad, which

FROM BOSNIAN SOIL WE ARE GAZING AT SERBIA AND NOVI PAZAR, THE THREE COUNTRIES SEPARATED ONLY BY A NARROW STREAM. (EAST OF VIŠEGRAD)

leaves but a general impression upon the mind. But to return to our journey.

The scenery was infinitely finer than that we had enjoyed from the train ; from our eminence we could see range upon range of hills in every direction. Behind us was a splendid view of the great hills we had crossed, and we could trace the stony road over the Semeć Planina.

Our road now descended to the level of the railway, still covered with stones, over which Mercédès bumped and jarred incessantly, while it was barely wide enough to take both wheels, our mudguards often hanging over on both sides. Presently, with that beautiful love of variety that had raised our ire earlier in the day, the road mounted again into the hills, only to be followed immediately by a sharp descent. Luckily we encountered but little traffic—a few peasants upon ponies and two veiled women on mules, each led by a Turk. We stopped the engine and did all in our power to aid them, for the animals were frantic and their owners but little better. Still, they saluted us very respectfully; indeed, we received a most astounding welcome all along the road, and it is one of the pleasantest recollections that we have. The Moslems were equally kind, touching the breast, mouth and forehead, and in many cases even raising their red fezzes. At last we came to the place where the road and railway part, the beauty of which we had really not yet seen. It is truly a wild place, the commencement of that gorge to Serbia whose entrance is between two great precipices, guarded by the battered ruins of two splendid strongholds that from their lofty eminence seem to gaze down upon the railway with supreme contempt and look like eyries. Between them, hollowed out of the living rock, is an enormous cave, a perfect brigand's lair, once used, perhaps, by Starina Novac and his band.

Turning to the right, we bade good-bye to the last sign of civilisation, the railway, and almost instantly found

our way blocked by a huge timber waggon that four wild-looking figures and six horses were endeavouring to move. The back portion had caught against a piece of fallen rock and it took nearly twenty minutes to free it.

We were now faced by a two-thousand-feet climb, in a deeply wooded country, broken here and there by pasture land ; the road—and in giving it this name I stretch my conscience almost to breaking-pitch—was positively appalling, climbing without relief and eclipsing even the Semeć in abnormal gradients. It would have been impossible to imagine that such hills really did exist had we not seen them with our own eyes, and, as luck would have it, the surface was infinitely worse. Innumerable stones shook Mercédès, while here and there the heavy two-wheeled country carts had smoothed the ruts, though they were too near together to be of any service as far as easing the tyres was concerned. Occasionally, however, we were able to run one pair of wheels in them. Most of the country folk were pure Serbs, with a sprinkling of Turks, but what struck us more than anything else was the quantity of settlers. As Austria followed the Roman example in dealing with the question of protecting a long and dangerous position, such as the Save, by parcelling out the land as homesteads, thereby gaining loyal subjects and at the same time putting a formidable barrier 'twixt herself and the Moslem, so in the present instance she is endeavouring to fill this land with settlers from her northern provinces, not only enriching the country by their industry and example, but gaining a firmer hold upon the land and a substantial strength against times of trouble. It was quite novel to come upon a typical Tirolean homestead amidst these weird surroundings, the whole family giving us a hearty welcome as we passed, and next minute to encounter a group that might have stepped out from the dawn of history.

THE FIRST AUTO TO REACH OVAC, THE LAST OUTPOST OF AUSTRIA. (THE FRONTIER OF NOVI PAZAR)

The narrow road, as it crawled steeply upwards, often only of sufficient width to allow Mercédès to pass, with barely a foot to spare, was overgrown with grass and weeds, and this, coupled with the loose stones, presented a most desolate appearance. At last we reached the summit of the climb and were rewarded, to a great extent, by the view afforded us. We were really gazing at the mountains of Serbia and Turkey, purple and brown, now barely ten miles away, and beyond them great billows of mountains, like the rolling prairie. A peaceful green valley lay at our feet some 2300 feet below, and down to it the road crawled through quiet pastures. We were now within sixteen miles of where we calculated Priboj should be, and once in the valley we made better progress, the road improving somewhat. Where the road first comes into view of the boundary river we reach an interesting spot, interesting mostly from a geographical rather than a picturesque standpoint, for here, separated only by a narrow stream, Serbia, Turkey and Bosnia meet. One can almost throw a stone on to the other bank, and can see the lonely patrols riding upon either shore. On horseback they trot along, with loaded rifle carelessly resting in the bend of the left arm, keeping a sharp look out for anyone foolish enough to try and slip unnoticed across the stream. Upon the Moslem shore the vigilance is equally keen, and Turks in dark green uniforms and smart fezzes, gun and heavy cartridge belts are no less watchful.

Presently we come upon a large military station close to a bridge, and are at once surrounded by Austrian soldiers. This proved to be Ovac, on the Austrian frontier, and across the bridge lay Turkey, guarded by a little house, over whose doorway blazed a Crescent surrounded by Turkish lettering. A *nizam* or "regular," in dark green uniform, with gun and heavy belt of cartridges, paced to and fro. We found our passage barred

by an Austrian officer, who very politely but firmly told us that it was quite impossible to reach Priboj, for many reasons, and we accordingly stopped the car to discuss the point. It seemed, he said, that we were the very first auto that had ever reached this frontier, and they were somewhat embarrassed to know what to do. Doubtless in ages past, when Turkey decided on her eleven per cent *ad valorem* duty upon cars entering the Ottoman Empire, she informed all her frontiers of the duty at the same time. In this case we were required to pay a deposit of £222, but again they did not quite know how to take the money. Our officer friend solved the difficulty by offering to telegraph to the Konak at Priboj (three miles away) and ask permission to allow us to go to that town and return duty free, say within two hours. We gladly accepted his kind offer.

While the telegraph was busy with the message another official asked to see our passports, which were duly examined and returned. Many officers and officials appeared upon the scene and chatted in a most friendly manner, showing great interest in Mercédès, who was evidently a great novelty to the large circle of " tommies."

Made originally by progressive Austria during the time that the Sandjack remained under her administration, the road had been allowed to fall into a total state of decay. An officer told us he had lately come from Priboj and found the road almost impassable, great rocks and stones having fallen upon it. There had been no attempt to clear away this obstruction—showing another example of the utter incapacity of Moslem rule. However, if a favourable reply should come from Priboj we determined at least to go as far as we could. One of the officers volunteered to accompany us on to Turkish ground, and we crossed the bridge. It is entirely due to our friend that we were able to take the photos we did, for he worked the Moslem in a masterly fashion. We

A SULLEN NIZAM GUARDED THE TURKISH FRONTIER WITH JEALOUS EYE. (EAST OF VISÉGRAD)

passed the sentry, who eyed us rather sulkily, and our friend, making a bee-line for the sergeant of the guard, shook him warmly by the hand, and before that fezzed individual could recover from his surprise he found himself accompanying us to a little Turkish café that stands in the shadow of the *douane*. We ordered coffee, liquor and cigarettes, and spent a very enjoyable half-hour. Winking knowingly, our friend, in quick German, told me to say nothing, but to go quickly and take what photos I wanted and to " buck up." I needed no second invitation, snapped the café, the *douane* and the bridge, returning triumphantly to find the Turk wedged firmly between Ken and the officer, the latter forcing coffee and cigarettes galore upon him. Our friend spoke Serbish, a little Turkish and, of course, German ; so by using him as a kind of human telephone we were able to exchange a few meagre ideas with the Turk. An orderly presently arrived from the Austrian side and with a salute informed us that the answer from Priboj was curtly in the negative. As the officials of the *douane* here were at sea, save in determination to refuse, there remained nothing for it but to give up all idea of completing the few miles and to return as soon as we liked to Višegrad.

It was with many feelings of regret that we left Turkish ground ; we had suffered much in our endeavour to reach it, and our only sorrow was that we had been prevented from reaching Priboj. Still, we carried away with us a very pleasant recollection of our first visit *en auto* to the land of the Crescent.

When we arrived back on to Bosnian soil Mercédès we found surrounded six feet deep in soldiers, handling and fingering her, and deriving much pleasure from their inspection. I feel sure that the men at the fortress of Ovac were sorry when we departed ; we had come no one cared from where, we went as mysteriously as we

arrived ; but we brought a pleasant break in the fearful monotony of their existence, and it was amidst much handshaking and clicking of heels that we swept out of Ovac, our faces turned to the west. It would be mere repetition to chronicle our journey back to Višĕgrad ; we climbed the long rise over the mountains, and taking a last view of Serbia and Turkey, turned our backs upon them and descended the awful apology for a road. Our friend, the repaired back tyre, here finally gave up the ghost and was deposited upon the roadside, much to the wonder of a distant circle of natives, and as a message for future automobilists, unless, as I strongly suspect, it was carried off as an emblem of our passage.

Dusk was falling as we reached Višĕgrad, where the now rather monotonous crowd of Moslems, Christians and Jews welcomed us with open arms and noisily escorted us back to the hotel, hindering Rodgers " in the discharge of his duty " as he covered Mercédès over for the night.

We had now to face rather a complex problem, a burning problem, to put it appropriately—that of benzine. We brought five extra gallons from Sarájevo, which with that in our tanks was just about enough for ninety miles upon a good road. It is something like that distance to Sarájevo, but as we were taking a new road, and heaven only knew what we might have to face, such as hours upon the first speed, it would be madness to set out without more. The proprietor was very doubtful, but dispatched a boy to the only chemist to make inquiries ; meanwhile we argued divers means of getting it from Sarájevo by train, and our anxiety was not lessened when we learnt that it would take a week, explosives having to come by special trains. Meanwhile the boy returned saying that the chemist kept some benzine in scent bottles, for taking stains out of clothes, and had about nine litres, for which he demanded twenty kronen. I was about to close joyfully with this offer when the

A SERBIAN PEASANT AND HIS WIFE FACING A CAMERA FOR THE FIRST TIME. (UPON THE SEMEĆ, VIŠEGRAD. BOSNIA)

proprietor himself came puffing up to say that he had found in the bazaar an old Turk who had a large stock (from Sarájevo) which he could not get rid of. I hurried in search of this angel in disguise, and found him turbaned and seated cross-legged upon a cushion. His price was only about that of the chemist, but what was more to the point, the old reprobate could supply us with his whole stock, some twelve gallons, and, to our mutual satisfaction, I closed with him upon the spot, and the precious fluid was consigned straightway to Mercédès, keeping five gallons in reserve and putting seven into the tank. As the sequel shows, the original quantity would have carried us barely half the distance to Sarájevo.

Next morning we were called at six o'clock, but found the weather had changed entirely ; instead of the hitherto incessant sunshine the sky was hidden by a dense mist and light rain was falling. It was no better as we quitted Visĕgrad for the last time. Notwithstanding the wet, a large and cheerful crowd stood patiently while the baggage was being strapped on to its place and gave us a final send-off. We had now the endless climb over the Semeć to face, the same road covered with stones, leading upward through the thick pines. Far beneath us Visĕgrad sinks lower and lower till it looks like a tiny toy village. The Semeć, as I remarked before, is a climb that would tax a motorist familiar with the highest passes of the Alps. Corner succeeded corner, zig upon zag, till finally, two thousand feet above, we reached the summit of the first hill.

We halted at one of the poor-looking cottages to obtain water and were soon surrounded by a miserable-looking crew. The man and woman who occupied the cottage resembled smugglers, but behaved like lambs. The man was more swarthy in appearance than his neighbours and looked half a gipsy ; indeed, the dwellers upon these lonely hills have an indescribable something in their

appearance, half of imbecility, half of cunning, peculiar to themselves. The nearest well, he endeavoured to make us understand in Serbish, lay a mile or more distant, but he had some water in a wooden barrel. We took all he had, giving him a gulden in exchange. I have never seen anyone more delighted in my life ; he kissed Sheila's and Dorothy's hands, and would have performed the same office for Ken and I had we not carefully dodged his embarrassing attentions. His wife also followed his example, receiving a krone from Sheila as she did so. She and Dorothy commenced to distribute sundry coins among the children, who, one and all, insisted on returning homage. A few men and women gathered timidly round us from the neighbouring cottages. They were terribly poor, unspeakably poverty-stricken, and it gave us pleasure to be able momentarily to brighten their lonely lives by making them small presents. A few kronen bestowed quietly upon the men and women, and smaller pieces upon the children, brought smiles and happy looks to their faces. What nice folk they were, the men knotting their presents in their sashes and one and all striving to show their gratitude. We left them almost in tears, and if many and fervent, though untranslatable prayers, could have made our path easy we should have finished our journey in comfort.

The storm fiend we had longed to see two days before at the witch's cave had apparently heard our modest request and arrived, with most of his forces, to gratify our rash wish, for though thunder and lightning were mercifully absent, the other elements did their best to make up the deficit. The wind howled like a pack of wolves, while the rain came in great gusts, bending the bracken and laying the ferns almost flat upon the ground, battering against the wind-screen and running down the glass till we could scarcely see. Now and then

a gust fiercer than its companions would make a decided and almost successful attempt to lift us clean off the road and dash us down into the valley far beneath. Slowly we battered our way upwards, now and then sheltered among the pines, again exposed to the full fury of the storm, and devoutly praying that all four tyres would hold out. The little white house belonging to the witch was scarcely visible, the rain coming in thick clouds almost like smoke, swirling and eddying round the little building and at times completely blocking it from view. We did not halt at the fast-shut door, but plunged at once down the appalling descent to Rogatica. I will not repeat our journey down to the valley or the language that the road elicited; we were, however, to a great extent, sheltered from the worst of the storm, and upon at last reaching the level found ourselves merely driving through heavy rain, the Semeć apparently sheltering Rogatica and the valley from the hurricane of wind.

To this day I devoutly wish we had stuck to our original journey from Sarájevo over the Romanja Planina, instead of yielding to the temptation of essaying the new road from Rogatica. I am still rather vague as to where we went or what immense distance we covered in our subsequent flounderings. But to begin properly, we left Rogatica in fine style, turning sharply to the left, and in the blinding rain miraculously escaped running down the most weird caravan it is possible to imagine. My first impression was that we had inadvertently got mixed up with a travelling circus and were surrounded by tame bears, walking upon their hind legs, great shaggy animals seen dimly through the sweeping rain. One of them came up close to us and revealed the unshaven face of a black-visaged man, completely enveloped in skins; then we made out the form of—save the mark!—a cab; yes, a cab, but what a libel

upon a self-respecting London growler. It was a Turkish cab in every sense of the word, its wheels bent out at ridiculous angles, while the horse seemed only to be held up by the wind. It was such a cab as you may find in Turkey's most "civilised" towns, and one that at home would take its place with Stephenson's "Puffing Billy" as a time-honoured relic of the past. There were four passengers besides the driver, and they were all walking; I cannot give a reason for this save that the wretched horse could barely drag himself along, or more likely that the cab had at last succumbed to senile decay. One man wore an enormous brown *bernouse* edged with fur, that made him resemble a camel. "Good heavens!" ejaculated Ken as he first caught sight of the weird-looking figure, "what an awful-looking beast," and he was still more surprised when the animal gravely saluted him and showered a short but very eloquent string of gutturals at us as we crawled past.

We had some twelve miles of really beautiful gorges, and for a few minutes the sun shone brilliantly, illuminating the scene; it was indeed a fairy glade, as the sunshine revealed one dark cavern after another and chased the shadows away. But only for a moment or so, then the bright beams disappeared and gloom settled down upon us; where the sunbeams had discovered elf-like caves and crannies, now yawned impenetrable darkness. Rain began to fall in great slanting sheets, enveloping everything and being driven through the gorge as through a tunnel. With all our curtains down we halted for lunch, and while the storm swept round us enjoyed our usual "picnic" in comparative comfort and happy ignorance of what the next hour or so would bring. Twice we were passed by the mail-cart, for the great railway ran at the end of the gorges, some twelve miles from Rogatica. Each mail-waggon carried a soldier sitting upon the back rail, holding his gun in his hand,

OUR WAY LEADS THROUGH ONE MAGNIFICENT GORGE AFTER ANOTHER. (EAST OF SARÁJEVO. BOSNIA)

in such a way that he could easily have been upset on to the road had the driver wished or carefully shot in the back. However, this is now only a formality, yet an interesting reminder of what necessitated the precaution. The mules shied at Mercédès, and the soldiers nearly dropped their rifles endeavouring to cling on to their places with both hands.

It was two o'clock before we were ready to proceed, and ten minutes later we came upon the railway, which our road follows for some little distance. Presently the railway enters a deep and fearsome-looking ravine, at whose entrance is a little station. Naturally we followed the road and found ourselves in a station yard. It certainly seemed out of place, that station with its familiar trucks, but what riveted our attention was the obvious fact that the road had vanished ; our sketch map showed a little town some fourteen miles away and the next station upon the railway. The rain was simply pelting down as I descended and went in search of somebody of whom to make inquiries. I found a number of officials in a small room playing *jeu-à-trois* with coins, who looked up in evident astonishment at my jack-in-the-box appearance.

" We are with automobile," I said in German, " and we wish to go to ——" naming the station at the other end of the gorges. One man spoke German in a halting sort of way, the others were pure Slavs. He knew of no road whatever. Then I mentioned Sarájevo, and he finally brightened up sufficiently to point out the way back, via Rogatica and the Romanja. But I was firm, our map showed a road somewhere near the railway, going to the village, from which place my bright informant acknowledged that a road continued to the capital.

I was about to give it up in despair when another man put in his appearance, and after a few minutes

bethought himself that there was a road to this place, a narrow road, truly, but still a road ; and as it was (by rail) only fourteen miles, we determined to risk it. Had our guardian angel been upon the alert that day he would have made sure that this man had met a swift and awful fate ere he was able to impart to us this information. However, we in our ignorance set out, according to instructions. This small road branched off to the left almost from the station entrance, and we had no difficulty in finding it, having passed it before, under the impression of its being a side path on to the line. Quickly we commenced to rise, and in a few minutes were passing over a bridge high above the railway and could see the toy station falling rapidly beneath us. The hill-side we were ascending was deeply wooded and the road, strange to say, almost free of stones, evidently unused, composed of a kind of black soil, and very narrow. It was quite a thrilling climb among the trees, and for a short time we rather enjoyed it, till we reached the first of the zigzags. As I said before, the road was extremely narrow, and the designers had evidently followed the plan of making the corners as acute as possible, scorning any attempt at a bend. Save for the road on the south side of the Campiglio Pass in Tirol, that is, from the summit down to Pinzola, I know of no road so resembling this ; on the Campiglio there are exceedingly few such turns, say six at most, but upon this road we soon lost count of them. I should say from twenty-five to thirty at least. It often required more than one back and fill before we could screw Mercédès round ; the rain swirled about us and the wind howled a melancholy accompaniment ; but one never-to-be-forgotten glimpse we were treated to, that of the railway's perilous journey through the deep gorge. Evidently a range of mountains spread themselves before us, opening as though split by a giant wedge in one place, just sufficient to allow

a tiny river passage, and of this fact the indomitable projectors of the new line had taken full advantage.

We were well over 1200 feet above the ravine, and just as we reached this altitude it seemed that fortune at last, tired of buffeting us in the face, relented her stern hand for a moment. We were now clear of the trees, a rough gust of wind tore the curtain of mist apart and we found ourselves gazing down upon the winding gorge as upon a picture framed in cloud: there were the jagged rocks, clinging with precarious footing to the hill-side, as though meditating the destruction of the shining rails far below; precipices abounded upon every side, bare and threatening—the home of the eagle. Far below, close to the silvery stream, we could trace for a short distance the track of the glittering rails, tunnel succeeding tunnel. It was truly a marvellous glimpse that we had, and then, as we still gazed enchanted, the curtain of mist swept across enshrouding us in its clammy embrace, and we continued the climb.

Never shall we forget that climb—corners sharp and dangerous, where no protection in the shape of walls was provided, deep gutters across the road, and all the while blinded by the storm. Now and then, completely enveloped in thick trees, amidst which we groped our way ever upwards, the road often became so narrow as to make it positively unsafe, while the frequent hair-raising turns kept us in a state of constant anxiety. I sometimes wonder how long that climb lasted. Our barometer registered over three thousand feet, and this entirely upon the first speed. Our greatest anxiety was the fear of coming upon an avalanche and discovering the road blocked, in which case we should find ourselves in about as awkward a fix as it is possible to conceive. Imagine, if you can, what this would mean! The road was far too narrow to think of turning, and though we might back down, yet the first acute turning would form

an insurmountable obstacle. There would remain nothing to do save to return on foot to the station and endeavour to obtain a gang of men to dig a way through the débris, and considering the type of country, I venture the opinion that these men would need some collecting. Again, the nature of the ground tends to avalanches, and the great boulders that alone are held by the rotting stumps of trees might at any moment fall on to our path. Another equally pleasing alternative would be the failure of some part of Mercédès, the result of which would be too awful to think of. Indeed, it was as lonely and out of the world a spot as might well be imagined ; not a house, not even a living soul, nothing but a narrow track winding ever heavenwards through a thick maze of trees, beaten and swept by the incessant mountain storms. Rain ! How it rained ! Water surged down the gullies and across our path, sweeping the road of every vestige of surface till it shone like a patent-leather boot.

About an hour after leaving the station the road reached the last struggling pine tree and passed out of the clinging wood, climbing steadily up a cone-shaped hill covered with thick tangled grass. It was not until we reached the summit of this awful hill that we realised what the strength of the gale was, for only upon rounding the top were we exposed to its full fury. With the suddenness of this unaccountable region the scene had again changed, but we were now getting accustomed to these startling alterations, for as upon the Romanja Planina the country was unutterably bleak and barren, and we were running upon the sloping edge of a giant range of misty hills, through whose midst we had penetrated. Before and above us was utter desolation ; below us—that is, to the left—everything was shrouded by thick mists, which we afterwards discovered hid a beautiful wooded valley. The road now took unto itself a series of bird-like swoops along the hill-sides, each ending

higher than the last, until we began to wonder if there was really an end to this road, for we had been over two hours steadily travelling and seemed to be mounting ever higher. Then again the storm played no mean part in our discomfiture; rain beat against the side curtains, and now and then, as we found a sheltered and, of course, muddy spot in the road, the sodden dirt would be thrown upon the glass screen, only to be washed off the next moment by the driving rain. It was an uncomfortable and anxious drive.

Visions of Starina Novac and his lawless band flashed across our mind. Well could one imagine them falling upon the infidel upon such a day as this, springing out from the blinding rain, taking form from the swirling mist, and then, their vengeance accomplished, sinking into the very ground as it seemed, or, carried away by the force of the storm, vanishing back to their stronghold upon the Romanja. At last, when it seemed as though we were doomed to wander perpetually upon the misty mountains and had almost given up hope of ever coming to the end of that endless road, we reached the extremity of the range of mountains and commenced a wonderful descent. Plunging into the trees, the road improved quite suddenly, and the turns and zigzags were decidedly easier. Indeed, it was more like a drive down one of the beautiful passes of Tirol, say the Pordoi or the Rolle, and totally different from what we had hitherto experienced. Unfortunately we were not in a fit state to appreciate its beauties. The cold had been bitter and we were only just commencing to thaw, while our minds had been rather racked by visions of a possible breakdown, though we had comforted ourselves with the thought that Mercédès had never yet played us false, and we put up a small prayer that she might keep her reputation clean upon this journey.

There was now a drop of over a thousand feet by a

series of long loops. Entirely hidden amidst the thick growth, the road was sheltered from the storm, and as we neared the end of the descent we actually emerged from the mists, and leaving them above our heads, found ourselves for a space free from rain. At last we reached the level, again coming upon a tiny station similar to the one we had left. We imagined we must have made a hole in the long distance to Sarájevo till we read the name of that little station and found, to our astonishment, that it was only twelve miles from where we had started the climb. We had been nearly three hours and covered close on thirty-five miles, and had, in reality, only got a paltry dozen miles closer to our destination. It was a road I would not take again and a drive that lingered long in our memory. The road now followed the railway and was quite good for a distance. Once more we encountered rain, and of our subsequent journey I retain little idea. Now and then we left the railway for a spell, only to traverse some deep valley, cross a mountain pass and descend to the lines again, till, after a ceaseless succession of hills, we came upon Biskra, that little village where three days ago (or was it weeks ?) we had turned to the left upon our ascent of the Romanja. As we were upon old ground little more remains to be told. We passed through the fairy glen, now deep in mists and awful mud, ascended the thousand feet, and finally descended into the Mitialchka gorge, so reaching Sarájevo.

We received quite a reception at the Grand Hotel, where we called for our heavy luggage and had tea, for we intended staying at Ilidže, the health resort, seven miles out in the Sarájevo Polje, for a few days, to give our nerves a rest and to overhaul Mercédès. Six o'clock struck ere we were ready to proceed, and it was fast becoming dark. A look at our back tyres and one front tyre was enough to wring compassion from the hardest heart that any anti-motorist could possess. The Semille

non-skid had been literally torn in handfuls off the tread, leaving great holes through which the plain canvas bulged in an alarming fashion, while the rubber of the front tyres hung down in melancholy draperies, as though conscious of their sorry plight. It was almost foolhardy to tempt Providence so far, especially after the way we had stretched her goodwill of late, but with that terrible hotel yard in our minds we determined to risk it. The rain was still coming down in one great sheet as we mounted to our seats and bid a last farewell to our friends of the hotel.

It was almost dark as we passed through the gateway of Sarájevo, out upon the broad flat road that had covered us so thick with dust and now lay six inches deep in glue-like mud. It was a race, those eight or nine miles, for the road makes a big detour, and we have to cross the plain ere we turn to the left to the Baths of Ilidže. Rooms awaited us, while Mercédès enjoyed the shelter of a splendid lock-up coach-house, into which she was backed to rest her weary bones. It took a bath and change, followed by a good supper (alas! that the feeding in Austria should be so barbarous), before we felt ourselves able to discuss our journey and marvel at the wondrous luck we had enjoyed. It was with many heartfelt thanks to a merciful Providence that at Ken's proposal we drank to the success that had crowned our rather mad dash for the Turkish-Serbian frontier.

CHAPTER VIII

A LAND OF WAR AND DESOLATION

ILIDŽE—GOOD-BYE TO SARÁJEVO—ASCENT OF THE IVAN PASS—AU REVOIR TO BOSNIA—FIRST VIEW OF THE HERZEGOVINA — WILD DRIVE — KONITZA — FAMOUS NARENTA DEFILE—THE VALLEY OF EARTHQUAKES—MOSTAR—OLD DREAM BRIDGE—MIRAGE OF MEMORIES —THE BLACK VIZIER—HISTORY—REVOLT OF 1876—INTOLERANCE OF MOSLEM RULE—SUNSET.

WE spent three days at Ilidže. The rest was most welcome, for we were bone-weary and Mercédès needed a very thorough clean and overhaul. Ilidže possesses thermal sulphur springs, known to the Romans, and is the fashionable watering-place of the Balkans. The hotels, of which there are three, were built and are run by the Government, all being connected by covered ways. Two of the hotels face one another, the big restaurant forming the centre of a half-circle. The grounds are very beautifully laid out and the growth is tropical. Were it not for the rather bad management and inferior catering, this place would soon be renowned. The situation is ideal, and the walks and baths are a source of constant enjoyment. I do not mean to cast any reflection upon the management personally, but rather upon the general custom of the place, if I may use so vague an expression. For instance, the *concierge* allots rooms, collects bills and generally acts as a whole office staff ; should he be

absent the visitor has to await his return. Again, the large dining-room is bare, cold and comfortless, rough boards upon the floor (table d'hôte, of course, is unknown). True, a band plays during meals ; unfortunately it is a military band, possessing numerous wind instruments and abnormally strong lungs. Another custom that is exceedingly annoying is that of presenting a separate bill for each item ; upon the morning we left there were no fewer than six persons waiting with bills at the entrance. The *concierge*, for the rooms ; our chambermaid, with an account for 1 krone 20 heller for candles ; Rodgers' chambermaid, with a bill for 40 heller for his " illumination " ; a waiter, with the total for our breakfast (other meals being paid as consumed) ; another waiter, for Rodgers' breakfast ; 3 kronen for carrying the luggage to and from the car ; and a further bill for something or other that I have since forgotten.

I do not complain of the charges, which were extremely moderate, but of the system of payment itself. It needs but a little alteration to make Ilidže one of the most attractive resorts in the Balkans.

One of the quaintest scenes is that of the many Moslem mothers bringing their children to bathe. They drive from Sarájevo in rather graceful pony waggons, sometimes as many as six or eight together, with their veiled servants, the whole concern presenting a very curious picture : the smart ponies, driven by a turbaned Mussulman, the load of closely veiled women, who sit beneath bright parasols ; so strictly is Mahommed's command obeyed that not even a hand is displayed to the common view, and it is often very amusing to watch what care is exercised in order to carry a parcel or parasol without exposing so much as a finger-nail.

On leaving Sarájevo we are saying farewell to Bosnia, for our way now leads over the bleak Ivan Pass, crossing the Dinarian Alps, the watershed between the Adriatic

and the Black Sea, and the boundary between Bosnia and the Herzegovina—that land terrible in history, and with a reputation second to none for wildness and grandeur of scenery, the last stronghold of paganism as it was the first of the Bogomile faith, and the chief scene of the revolutions and awful massacres of 1850 and 1876.

The distance to Mostar is something like eighty miles ; the road I know well, crossing the wild Karst region and climbing over the Hranitzava-Planina, thence through the Narenta defile, perhaps the wildest and most savage gorge in existence. Only last year Sheila and I had found our road blocked by an avalanche. It was afternoon and raining hard ; above us the black summits were hid in cloud, and below the raging waters fought fiercely. It was an unenviable position, and eventually we had to spend the night in the village of Konitza and telegraph for men to come from Jablanitza to open up the road.

How fresh was the morning when we set out from Ilidže across the Sarájevske Polje. We could see the white domes and minarets of the Damascus of the North amidst the green verdure upon the lower slopes of the mountains. Very soon we leave the plain and plunge into a gut in the hills called the Valley of the Žujevina, the narrow gauge of the railway constructed in 1891 crossing and recrossing our road time after time. As it mounts the valley it has, here and there, to resort to the help of rack and pinion. Mr. Harry de Windt, speaking of this same single line, says : " Had the railway been constructed in Western Europe it would undoubtedly have been the talk of the world, for surely no line was ever laid across so difficult a piece of country. In places whole cliffs have been blasted away to enable the metals to follow a narrow pathway, with granite walls and nasty precipices on either side. Compared even with the

Alaska trains, over the White Pass, the cuttings and precipices are greater than on that celebrated line." Had Mr. de Windt travelled over the Višegrad line he might have altered his opinion. True, the railway is a wonderful work, but its difficulties and contortions are as nothing compared with those of the road. A Mahommedan vizier could not have maltreated a Bosnian *rayah* worse than the railway has dealt with the road; not content with crossing and recrossing it at the most inconvenient times, it must needs usurp its place in the worst defiles, and force the road to climb round perilous rocks and over the tops of precipice cliffs. But we are more than compensated by the superb scenery unknown to those mortals in the train.

As we continue to ascend the valley, the scenery gradually changes, becoming bolder and more rugged; the rich vegetation of Bosnia gives place to hardy chestnut and larch, and finally to the sweet-smelling pine. The utter absence of song-birds is now most noticeable, and one regrets the sweet music so welcome in other lands. The road, and of course the railway, passes through mile after mile of old forgotten Turkish burial grounds. It is almost numbing when one tries to realise the extent of this apparent cemetery; upon either hand we see nothing but gravestones, their whiteness throwing them up in contrast to the green of the hill-sides; the turbaned heads and crescent leaning at every conceivable angle seem to gaze at us in a manner almost creepy. The whole scene bears eloquent testimony to the long rule of the Osmanli in these lands. Here and there is dotted a *tshardake* or Turkish guard-house, commanding some narrow gorge or capping some important hill.

We have been approaching the great Hranitzava-Planina, celebrated for their fierce grandeur, and we find our way barred by the frowning mountain range of the Vilovatz. Over this range the Turk had built a road,

and this has been renewed by Austria; it is called the Ivan Pass. Before the advent of the railway, which here again shows its cowardice by penetrating right through by means of a long tunnel, the road was much used, in fact, it was the only means of communication between the two lands, but it has since fallen into a state of disuse, being seldom, if ever, traversed. It is becoming covered by the loose earth and stones falling down the steep hill-side. The gradient is rather severe, and one or two of the hairpin turns are particularly steep, though feeble in comparison with the Semeć. We have now left the gentle Žujevina far beneath us and are climbing rapidly through thick woods of larch and pine; the sky is overcast, and the road often deep in shadow. Here and there we must be careful to avoid the stones and rocks, and our back wheels send out a shower of small stones; turn succeeds turn; far beneath us we see the valley receding, and we have something of the feeling of looking down from the car of a balloon. Again we are in the shadow of the pines and the view is lost; still rising, we reach a level stretch, the narrow road skirting a deep precipice, and we are upon the summit, nearly three thousand four hundred feet above the sea-level. The altitude is nothing, but the state of the road, the utter absence of wheel-marks and the deadly silence are enough to bring to one a sense of absolute loneliness, and a reminder of the distance from civilisation.

We were now virtually upon the boundary of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, the backbone of the Dinarian Alps; behind us lay Bosnia, a land deeply wooded, broken into many long and well-watered valleys, wonderfully fertile, possessing rich soil and many valuable mines; looking back, we see range after range of hills, gradually leaning to the left into the plains of the Save and the Unna to the right; beyond Sarájevo lies Serbia, recalling vividly our three days' journey. The whole scene gives one the

DESCENT OF THE SAVAGE IVAN PASS. (FROM BOSNIA INTO THE HERZEGOVIN

impression of quiet peace, and there is a decidedly blank feeling as one parts from this hospitable country with its romantic history and its wonderful mixture of peoples.

Before us lay the Herzegovina, comprising that terrible region of the Karst, the limestone land of precipices and jagged peaks, a land of cruel and pitiless mountains, sloping in a south-westerly direction to the Adriatic, broken by gigantic valleys, great cañons, as though the raw limestone had been split open by a giant wedge. The surface of this huge region is bare and fruitless, few trees and crops can find fertility for bare subsistence, and the lack of water to irrigate the vineyards, save only in the valleys, is one of the curses of the land, though in these valleys vegetation bursts forth in tropical splendour and abundance. Many streams are partly subterranean; emerging suddenly into some dreary valley, they produce, with the help of the scorching sun, the most luxuriant vegetation, tobacco fields, fig trees, pomegranates; olives and vines grow side by side until, upon reaching the end of the valley, the river just as suddenly plunges into some cavern and continues its hidden course, and the land is once more blasted with utter barrenness.

Immense wastes of rocks form a giant plain up to the hills of the land of the Black Mountain—Montenegro—broken here and there by wonderful towns of the East, enchanting oases of Moslem life and sparkling colour in the great grey desert of the Karst.

Strange medieval castles stand upon the summits of precipice-edged rocks, guarding some deep region or the mouth of some pass; walled towns and villages, belonging to a bygone age, still flourish, three hundred years behind their time; and the people who live in the land, the Christian *rayah* and the Moslem, fierce and dignified, valour-proven, fond of war and song, brought up from their youth as warriors, are proud to sing and extol the centuries of blood that have passed, where barely thirty

years ago raged the struggle between the Cross and the Crescent. The bloodiest deeds in history have taken place in these dark gorges; massacres unspeakable, unrepeatable in their very ferocity and horror, have been enacted here. No wonder Constantine named the inhabitants of the land of Hun (Herzegovina) "Zachlumoj," which means "living at the back of the mountains." We cannot help a feeling almost of awe as we stand upon the summit of the Ivan Pass, upon the very threshold of this enchanting land, and, leaving peace behind us, enter this region, the very emblem of war, desolation and destruction. No wonder in our ears ring the war-songs, the melodies of ancient folk-lore and all the thousand and one enchanting memories of the land of the Herzegovina.

The descent to Tartshin is rather rough, the road narrow, very steep and covered with stones; the silence is deathlike, and when we stopped Mercédès upon the summit and sat in our places gazing upon the bird's-eye view of Herzegovina the stillness was positively oppressive.

We were now descending rapidly towards the Narenta valley far below. The pines disappear and the scenery quickly verges from the beautiful into the magnificent. The road leads through a series of deep defiles, ever descending, above the low line of hills. Before us, covered with immense forests of oak and beech trees, rises the jagged mass of Bjelashiza, towering up into the blue heavens, a giant row of nature's fortresses twisted into every conceivable and fantastic semblance—turrets, bastions and battlements. Immense walls of rock, blasted to make room for the road, tower in a threatening attitude overhead, as though meditating our destruction. The railway had at last emerged from the interior of the mountains, and as though ashamed of itself, hurried along upon the opposite side of the valley.

A WORLD OF PRECIPICES. (NARENTA DEFILE. HERZEGOVINA)

It would be impossible to exaggerate the wondrous beauties of the scene. We are now descending through a deep gorge, yet high above the trembling waters; behind us the Ivan Planina rears itself like a great barrier, every moment rising higher and higher and seeming more impossible as we descend. At last we reach Konitza and catch our first glimpse of the Narenta. Rising at the foot of the Tshemerno Mountains, the Narenta descends in cataracts to Konitza, where it becomes a river, and is supposed to be navigable for small flat-bottomed boats, but so treacherous are its currents and eddies, so numerous its whirlpools and subterranean passages, that even the trunk of a great tree is liable to be sucked into one or other of its underground caverns. "The man or beast who falls into the Narenta is doomed," runs the proverb.

Konitza is a famous little village possessing a beautiful old stone bridge, for the honour of whose construction Slavs and Mahommedans vie with each other. The ancient Roman road, built to join Dalmatia and Pannonia, passed through the town, but there are few traces of it left.

There is rather an interesting legend that has been unearthed by Dr. Kartuiski referring to the foundation of Konitza. It is to the effect that in olden days there used to be, some score miles distant, a strange lake, a miniature dead sea, upon whose shores a large community of robbers had built their homes. They were fierce men, given to pillage and all kinds of violence. St. Sava, wearied of their iniquities, appeared in humble garb at their doors and demanded hospitality. This they roughly refused him, and in order to punish them St. Sava dried up all the streams that supplied the lake.

The saint, still intent on punishment, met a poor widow named Loth, who had only a little garden, one horse and a cow. She was alone in the world, save for a son, a good and pious man, who welcomed the saint, and with his

mother, offered him of their best. St. Sava determined to reward them. "Leave this place," he said to them. "For with God's help I will punish these men for their sins. Go on and on until your horse stops, and with its foot scratches three times upon the earth. Live upon that spot. God be with you." The good widow and her son gathered together their few possessions, and with the horse and the cow set out at once. For a few moments they paused to survey the home they were leaving, and at that moment the town disappeared under their very eyes, the inhabitants perishing with cries of terror.

Terrified at what they had seen, the lonely couple hurried onwards, and as night was falling reached a large river; here the horse stopped. "*Haïdé! Haïdé! moi konitzou*" ("Get on! Get on! my little horse"), cried the son, and in response the horse lifted its foot and scratched upon the earth three times. Then the old woman and her son built themselves a home, and lived to a ripe old age.

Thus was founded Konitza upon the beautiful banks of the Narenta.

In 1446 King Tomascević, the last king of Bosnia, drove one of the many nails into his coffin through his renewed persecutions of the Bogomiles by issuing here a National Diet to suppress their worship. In 1834 a large and important monastery of the Franciscan Order that had been built near here was utterly destroyed by the Turks. Konitza is wonderfully Moslem, with a background of beautiful mountains; its numerous little mosques give it a charming appearance, heightened by the swiftly flowing Narenta.

Continuing our descent along the left bank, we commence perhaps the most wonderful drive imaginable. After one has seen the gorges of the Tarn, Gonda, the road between Jajce and Banjaluka, and many others similar, it is safe to say that none can compare with the

NAUGHT CAN COMPARE WITH THE NARENTA DEFILE IN ABANDON, WILDNESS AND GRANDEUR.
(THE HERZEGOVINA)

Narenta defile in abandon, wildness and grandeur. Leaving Konitza, the Narenta takes almost a complete circle to the left, skirting the Prenj Mountains. The huts of the shepherds and peasants are built no longer of wood and plaster with great overhanging roofs, as in Bosnia, but of black and white lava, chunks of scorched rock, and roofed with long slabs of slate. Thus is Jablanitza built. The Government is trying to establish a summer resort here, and one cannot imagine a more lovely spot to spend a short time at or one more difficult of access. A small river breaks into the Narenta from the enclosing hills. This is the historic Rama, which in olden times gave its name to the whole district; indeed, the Herzegovina was, in Hungary at least, referred to as "the kingdom of Rama." We commence to notice a great change in the people—their dress is different. The men, though mostly turbaned, are clothed more akin to the Montenegran, while the Moslem women not only work in the fields, but actually dispense with a veil—this custom is alone in force round Jablanitza—an example unique in a Mahommedan land to-day. Both Evans and Ashboth explain this phenomenon as the result of the original inhabitants being of the Bogomile faith, and driven by the Catholic persecutions to adopt that of Islam. Their descendants, strong in their love of freedom, have never compelled their women to veil, as in other villages, while the very nature of the ground made it imperative for every available hand to assist in nourishing the scanty crops and keeping the wolf from the door, in a very literal sense indeed.

In 1868, during the awful atrocities perpetrated by Christian and Moslem alike, Jablanitza and its surroundings were to all intents and purposes cut off from communication with the outside world. No Turkish official or troop dare enter the Narenta defile, for every peasant who dwelt within this sombre region was filled with an

inherent hatred that resented the rule of the Osmanli with a fierceness bequeathed by their Bogomile forefathers. Terrible tales are told of unlucky Moslem patrols that had ventured to follow the eddying stream and had never returned; sometimes the angry waters tossed back a distorted corpse, slashed and mutilated beyond recognition, that bore a fearful message of the horrors enacted by the "devil's children," as they were styled.

It is just after quitting Jablanitza that the gorges assume their wildest and most majestic aspect; it is as though Nature herself had endeavoured to crowd together range upon range of towering mountains, peak after peak rising into the blue heavens, till it seems as if road and river must perish, for only a miracle can preserve them from the ever-threatening destruction; precipices abound upon every hand. There is something overpowering in the whole scene. A great awe strikes into the soul as one gazes above and around; it were as though one had wandered into the workshop of Nature. Is it here she finds her material? See what frail support holds the avalanche in check—great mountains of cooled lava, that once poured molten into the valley, now rise, torn and ragged, of a whitish grey that hurts the eye.

> Is this the scene
> Where the red earthquake demon taught her young
> Ruin? . . . were these their toys?

The road is hewn out of the living rock high above the swirling waters. It was here that Sheila and I had so narrowly escaped an avalanche last year: only a short hour before Mercédès reached this spot, a baby avalanche, ere it grew to maturity, broke from its home above, and came tumbling headlong, strewing the road with enormous boulders. We had had to spend the night at a little inn, while many men toiled wearily to make a passage, and twenty hours later we were able to just squeeze through the gap they had cut.

FOR TWELVE LONG HOURS MEN TOILED WEARILY TO CLEAR A WAY THROUGH THE ENORMOUS DEBRIS.
(AN AVALANCHE IN THE NARENTA DEFILE)

One feels something of that which Gulliver must have experienced ; everything is so immense, so overwhelming, as though a vast army of giants were gazing down upon one, debating among themselves which should crush this strange intruder, much in the same way that a party of schoolboys might regard a stray beetle. Slowly we pass along the precipice edge : even the noise of the engine is lost in the great solitude. Below, the Narenta, catching the sunshine, reflects a thousand different colours that fascinate the eye. We are through at last and the gorges close behind us ; yet the majestic mountains recede only a little, though they no longer gaze at their own image in the stream ; they have given way but reluctantly, and threaten every moment to crush the road. We cross the river by a second bridge, " the iron gate " of the Narenta, as the natives call it.

Here and there the road is crossed by the remains of avalanches that had poured down from the heights, but the way had been freed of the greater portion of the débris, and it was only necessary to stop now and then to remove some rock or stone from our path. There was no traffic upon this road. Mile after mile stretches away into the distance, lonely and deserted ; now and then a band of Christian peasants appears, the women dressed almost identically with the men—coarse white coats, reaching down to the knee, and wide, baggy trousers, in some cases tucked into long boots—the only difference between the two sexes being that the men wore a bright red turban and the women a large white cloth, not unlike the head-gear of the Neapolitan women. Save for these occasional travellers, the scene around us lay deserted, mile after mile of gorges, some fearful, narrow and dangerous, others open for a short distance, only to contract like the neck of a bottle.

Hour after hour we pass through this wilderness of gorges ; since escaping from the dark embrace of the

Narenta defile we feel the proximity of the South. It calls to us in many subtle ways: the sun beams down with almost tropical force, the heat is great and the vegetation luxurious. Though still overshadowed by the jagged peaks of the stricken Karst, thanks to the Narenta there has sprung up a natural garden of great richness: wild fig-trees abound, and hundreds of pomegranates bow down with rosy fruit, while some industrious hand has staked up earth and formed little terraces, where flourishes the vine.

We cross numerous curious waterfalls, curious because they follow the general tendency of the rivers of the Herzegovina by having no visible source and in many cases no known destination. They issue out of some cavern high above the road and come roaring down the precipice slope into the Narenta. Others bubble gently out of narrow crevices and trickle down into the swift waters. Many we were able to examine, for they emerged close to the road, and very interesting they were.

Often the road is cut through what appears to be the dried-up bed of a great river; it is as though the Narenta, at some period of its existence, had completely filled the deep valley or that a great upheaval had taken place, throwing up the former bed, and that a new way had been found by the waters. Innumerable stones, worn smooth and round, as though washed for countless ages, lie embedded in the hard bank; here and there the road is overshadowed by the curious formation. At length we emerged into the plain of the Bjelo-Polje, bordered by towering mountains. Every summit, and indeed every range, is of the same dull, uniform grey colour, and one feels as if one were surrounded by a great circle of volcanoes. This is but the first experience of the dreaded Karst, a name soon to become familiar as the unbounded space of barren limestone that lay in our path. The plain we are now in is perfectly flat and

DESCENT OF THE IVAN PLANINA AFTER LEAVING THE NARENTA DEFILE. (THE HERZEGOVINA)

covered with Southern vegetation; generation after generation the Narenta has worn its bed, till a short distance away it completely disappears from view; twisting this way and that, it flows swiftly upon its secret way and reaches Mostar.

The road heads straight for the white-housed town in the distance, built at the extremity of the plain, where the Podveles and the mountains of Hum are alone separated by the Narenta; thus nestles Mostar.

"Half Oriental, half Italian, and altogether Herzegovian, picturesque and monumental. Every stone declares war and fighting. No city in the world proclaims so loudly as this one does that she owes herself, her origin, her very being to battle, war, fortifications and mighty aggression," says Ashboth. In her narrow streets you rub elbows with the same Moslems, Jews, gipsies, and Christian peasants as at Sarájevo, from the myriad of minarets rings out the *muezzin*.

Upon our first visit the hotel at Mostar was a welcome and quite unexpected surprise to us; instead of a miserable Turkish *khan*, that might have been expected from what we have read of the town, we found a modern building, erected by the Government and run by an enterprising German.

Our apartments resembled a royal suite in size, and were lit by innumerable candles; the *spiesaal* was alive with uniforms; a table extending the whole length of the room was entirely occupied by officers, from the commandant of the forces down to the latest ensign—a glittering mass of light blue and silver.

Mostar is a Herzegovinian idyll: the Oriental character of the Moslem is blended with the sterner valour of the Roman; the cold North forced to mingle with the South. "From Mostar sprang mighty heroes of sword and pen, from Mostar, the home of all the arts and sciences," to quote the words of Dervish Pasha.

The town really consists of one long street, for the bare mountains forbid the houses extending on either side, and they are forced into the plains at each end. The Narenta is crossed by two bridges, one a large iron construction, lately erected for traffic, and the other, the greatest and most beautiful monument, not only of Mostar, but of all the Balkans, is the famous single-span arch of stone known as " The Roman Bridge." There is something almost divine about the conception of this bridge: it is formed of one single span of fifty-five feet, and the apex is seventy feet above the green waters. The path over it is very narrow, and the traveller is protected by two low walls. Each end of the bridge is guarded by a small Turkish fort. Many a great man has been mentioned as the builder. Popular Slavonic imagination loves to attribute it to Trajan or Hadrian, while the Moslems, outraged that such a heaven-sent inspiration should be thought to have originated from a *gyaur*, calls Sultan Suliman, known to the Faithful as " the Magnificent," the builder. Authorities now argue that although it is clearly of Roman design the present material is purely Moslem, and endeavour to strike the happy medium of supposing it to have been originated by Rome, fallen in the fourteenth century, and to have been rebuilt (upon the old plan) by the Infidels. No matter if authorities differ as to its origin, they are all agreed as to its exquisite beauty. To our untutored minds it seemed worthy to rank with the Alhambra Palace, not in comparison, that would be absurd, but as a worthy sister, equally fair in a different type of beauty.

There is a legend relating to the foundation of the bridge that during the reign of Sultan Suliman he commanded the noted architect Sinan to construct a stone bridge across the Narenta, at the spot where stood a frail iron structure, slung by chains, which alone con-

THE OLD DREAM BRIDGE. MOSTAR. (HERZEGOVINA)

nected the town with the beautiful gardens upon the other bank. Sinan protested that such a feat was impossible, whereupon a carpenter of Mostar voluteered to attempt the work, with the present wonderful result. Another fable is that the Christian architect Rade obtained his liberty in return for producing the bridge. Others say that the bridge collapsed time after time, and it was only upon appealing to the goddess of the mountain forests, Vila, that the final solution was obtained, and this by building up a pair of lovers in the foundations, through which, to quote Ashboth, resulted "a bridge, a masterpiece which puts to shame all the architects in the world."

To watch the traffic passing over the bridge is one of the most enchanting sights imaginable. The Government has wisely forbidden aught save foot traffic, and all day long there passes a continuous stream of folk, who bring back vividly to the mind tales from the *Arabian Nights* —a maze of strange costumes and even stranger faces. Grave Moslems, in spotless white turbans, are elbowed by bent and wrinkled Jews in long coloured coats, who are again jostled by white-robed *rayahs*, hardly distinguishable from their spouses in trousers and high boots; their faces are broad and weather-beaten. Among the throng glide the dark figures of Moslem women, shunning all intercourse with living souls save among themselves. Dainty Christian maidens, in red fez set at a provoking angle amidst a mass of wilful hair, smile broadly at the smartly dressed farmers; now and then a caravan of mules, perhaps as many as ten, tied to each other's tails, is led across the bridge and causes no end of trouble in the narrow way, almost precipitating a few luckless figures over the shallow parapet into the whirlpools below. Sometimes an Austrian policeman, in smart uniform and red fez, passes over the bridge, or a Government official, whose European clothes look

horribly out of place. Ancient Bagdad is before our eyes, and when we lift them off the gay throng and look along the beautiful Narenta we see its high banks crowded with queer white houses, and from amidst their heavy slate roofs rises a profusion of slender minarets and white domes, which, catching the sun's rays, shine up brilliantly against a background of bleak grey mountains. "... dont l'aiguille s'élance tels que des mats d'ivoire armés d'un fer de lance."

Upon each summit stands a fort; there is not a hill-top that is uncrowned by fortifications, look where you will, and through our binoculars we can make out the miles of barbed wire round and round each stronghold, and with such profusion as in many cases to be quite conspicuous to the naked eye. This was enough to warn us to obtain permission from the commandant of the forces ere we photographed. It was exceedingly lucky we did so, for scarcely had Sheila snapped a beautiful old mosque than a red-fezzed official swooped joyfully down upon us, only to retire with a disappointed salute at the sight of the signature.

The hotel possesses a beautiful situation, standing upon the bank of the green-blue waters and facing a small park; upon the seats beneath the thick trees a strange medley of figures gather at midday to enjoy the cool shade: here pass Austrian officers on their way to the hotel, now and then a rough porter squats upon his load and rests awhile, even the dignified Moslem lingers for a minute or more ere he steps out into the dazzling sunshine. Mostar possesses many graceful mosques, though none are so fine as the great mosque at Sarájevo; but what strikes the traveller is that here the majority are built of dressed stone; the most beautiful is the Karagjoy mosque, whose slender minaret is formed of smooth white stone, octangular in form and of very graceful design.

THE AGES OLD NARENTA FLOWS TRANQUILLY THROUGH MOSTAR

A handsome Greek cathedral has been erected commanding a fine view of the town, which must for ever be a sore thorn in the minds of the Faithful, for its foundations easily top the highest minaret. The bazaar of Mostar is not nearly so extensive as that of Sarájevo, but nevertheless it is delightfully Oriental, and one may purchase many curious trinkets. A great trade throughout Bosnia and the Herzegovina is in black wooden ornaments inlaid with silver, walking-sticks, spoons, forks, vases, etc., and metal-work inlaid with the same metal—very similar to the work one buys in Spain, where gold is substituted for silver. Undoubtedly the most curious object in all Mostar is the strange garment worn by a certain class of veiled women. At first sight it is decidedly puzzling to discern quite what manner of object is shuffling down the street. Taken for granted that there is a Moslem woman inside (for you will never see so much as a finger-nail, let alone the tip of her nose), you next endeavour to analyse the atrocious garment that conceals her. A huge blue or black cape of heavy serge hangs from her head to her heels, and just where you calculate her face should be projects a kind of early Victorian bonnet, squashed into a vertical split and composed of the same dark material. As she passes you see that from each ear (as near as you can judge) hangs a wide sleeve ; the cuffs are sewn to one another and join at the back.

You will look at perhaps half a dozen of these extraordinary figures before the right solution to the problem strikes the eye, and you wonder why you did not see it at once. The puzzling garment is, in fact, a huge military great-coat, large enough to fit a giant and possessing an enormous collar. The head of the woman supports the coat between the shoulder-blades, the back of the neck thus resting upon her forehead. The early Victorian bonnet is in reality the great collar turned up and stiffened

and projecting far out before the face, completely hiding the features; the long sleeves are now easily accounted for, and of course, not being required, are sewn together to prevent their getting in the way. Our lightest clothes we found too hot for this climate, and the condition of the women beneath their great-coats must be almost unbearable. It is only in Mostar that this strange female costume is worn, and of how it originated I can find no authority.

We stayed three days in Mostar; we knew the town well, this being our third visit. There is something so entrancing, so dream-like in this gay little place that I should never tire of returning time after time and spending a few days amidst its picturesqueness; of all the towns of Bosnia or the Herzegovina, Mostar is the one that wound itself most round our hearts and lingered longest in our minds.

It is worth while to recall the fierce history of Mostar, and more especially the recent history, during the years that immediately preceded the Austrian occupation. In olden times Mostar was not the great city of the Herzegovina, but lay seven miles from the capital Blagaj (meaning "treasure"), now merely a jumble of ruined stone huts. This town was domineered by the great stronghold of Stepanograd, belonging to the Hranic, the Princes of Hum, which we should pass upon our ride to the Adriatic. Under the dukes of St. Sava the village of Mostar first sprang into importance, and it was in 1440 that Radivoj Gost, the "Mayor of the Palace" of the first Duke of St. Sava, is responsible for the commencement of its present importance.

When the Moslem invasion became an accomplished fact Mostar was chosen as the residence of the official Vizier of Herzegovina, and by a curious whim of fate soon proved an ideal place from which the successive viziers were able to defy their nominal over-lords of

THE WEIRD GARMENT WITH WHICH THE MOSLEM WOMEN OF MOSTAR CLOTHE THEMSELVES

Travnik. To hurry on to more recent times, the most celebrated and notoriously cruel Vizier was undoubtedly the terrible Ali Pasha, of execrable memory, who in 1833 first took up his official governorship. Treacherous to the hand that fed him, he made such a name for fiendish cruelty that the nations of Europe actually insisted upon a commission sitting to inquire into the cause of the trouble that resulted. It seems that Ali Pasha had a weakness he could never quite overcome, for contemplating the impaled heads of Christians. To him the sole idea of perfect happiness consisted of lying at full length upon a divan, and, while feeding or smoking, to be able to rest his eyes upon the long rows of oak staves that lined the walls of his fortress, each decorated by a newly severed head of an unbeliever. So prone did he at length become to this indulgence that he even had the walls of the fort raised so that he might the more easily see their ghastly burdens. He would dispatch "Ibrahim," his "Cavass-Basha," to collect every Christian *rayah* he could find and strike off his head. Numbers were immaterial so long as the one hundred and fifty staves lacked not the newly severed head of an unbeliever.

Evans relates how Ali Pasha dealt with a refractory subject who might annoy him; his process was ever the same, and he kept a stock phrase up his sleeve for the occasion. To the wretched man he would say, "Wilt thou never cease to trouble me, till such time as I hew thy head from thy body, and bid them stick it upon the palisades, then shalt thou give me peace at last." A very effectual and highly satisfactory way, so Ali Pasha discovered.

For seventeen years the black Vizier spread death and outrage upon every side, and it was not until 1850 that his atrocities were ended. At the same time he did much for the Herzegovina, introducing mulberry trees,

silkworms and rice culture. As he sent considerable money back to Stamboul, his " eccentricities " were looked upon with an indulgent eye by the Sultan so long as they did not interfere with his own authority. It was during the revolt of the Mahommedan magnates that the Sultan learnt that Ali was in league with the insurgents and promptly dispatched Omar Pasha (the second conqueror of Bosnia) to Sarájevo, to take steps against him and to put an end to the life of one of the worst characters that ever blackened a page of history.

During the more recent insurrection of 1876 we hear much mention of Mostar as the head-quarters of Dervish Pasha, the Sultan's Vizier of the Herzegovina.

For years, nay centuries, these latter revolts had been brewing in the minds of the *rayahs*, whose position was becoming more intolerable every day. The Moslems treated them as dogs, and considered that their lives were already forfeited on account of their religion. But the climax came in 1875, when the official tax-gatherers journeyed to Nevesinje, a village upon the edge of the great Nevesinsko Polje, the limestone heights that extend to the great plain of the Montenegran Alps, and demanded the full tax for the succeeding year.

Now it so happened that the harvest, scanty at its best, had entirely failed the previous year and the village was practically in a state of starvation. The villagers protested, whereupon the tax-gatherers, refusing to listen to any protest, loosed the " Zaptiehs " upon the defenceless Christians. The worst and most atrocious deeds of the Bashi-Bazooks did not outshine the wanton cruelty of these human tigers, and the horrors and outrages they perpetrated upon the helpless women and children are too revolting even to think about. In a few hours the village was deserted, the Christians, as many as could escape, travelling by foot across the borders of Montenegro, whose brave patriots are their

brothers in religion. From there they endeavoured to lay their troubles before the Emperor Franz Josef of Austria, who was then in Dalmatia, with the result that an inquiry was instituted by the consular body to probe the matter to the bottom.

The Vali of Bosnia, to avoid unpleasant results, instituted a sham commission to inquire into their, according to him, absurd grievances and thereby throw dust into the eyes of the powers. Special permits were issued to the refugees, who had fled to Montenegro, to return in safety and lay their troubles before this precious commission. No sooner had they trusted to the honour of this permit, and crossed into the Herzegovina, than they were fired upon by Moslem troops, while those few people who eventually found their way back to Nevesinje were promptly murdered by the Mahommedans in that village, who, as it leaked out afterwards, were not even punished for this foul deed. But the whole Christian district had risen in revolt and, seizing what arms were available, fortified themselves in likely places where they could safely defy the Turk. The commission demanded to know their troubles and what they wanted done. Their answer was moderate in the extreme : all they desired was to have equal rights with the Moslem, that their women should no longer be molested, that their Church should be respected, and that they should be protected from the wanton fury of the Zaptiehs ; and finally, that when the Government required their labour or their horses, they should have some remunerative return. These simple demands never passed the Vali's commission. The only result was an order commanding every Christian to lay down his arms and await patiently the finding of the commission.

The Christian reply was, willingness to do as required if a guarantee of protection against the bloodthirsty Zaptiehs would be given. The Vali, however, could not

give this, so the Christians, despairing of getting justice, fled to the mountains. The utter incapacity of Turkish rule was demonstrated by the result; the Mahommedans, mad with fanatical frenzy and under the leadership of a Beg, broke into the Government armoury and, seizing the guns, swords and weapons they found, rushed forth to slay every unbeliever unlucky enough to get in their path. Nevesinje was practically deserted, save for a few sick peasants whose infirmities forbade their moving; these unfortunates were instantly massacred in cold blood, and their murderers thirsted for more. They got their thirst slacked in a way they did not expect. Can one wonder at the result of this act? The Christians, hiding in the surrounding mountains, hearing the shrieks of their fathers and mothers being murdered, threw discretion to the winds, and with splendid bravery swept down upon the little village. No Moslem rage excelled theirs, and they took such revenge upon the dusky butchers of Allah that few, if any, lived to tell the tale.

Under the plea that the fierce Christians were murdering the helpless and peaceful Moslems, the Turkish Government at once seized the opportunity of dispatching two regiments to Nevesinje, with orders to slay every Christian they should happen to catch *en route*. This was the last straw. The Christians—Orthodox and Catholic—rose as one man, and there commenced a guerrilla warfare of the most bitter and atrocious nature upon either side. To quote the words of Evans, who was upon the spot during this trouble: "In such matters religion counts for little, human nature for everything; and there seems no good reason—*a priori*—for doubting the worst instances of Christian atrocity that we heard of. But granting that the Christians were guilty, as our Consul asseverated, of the terrible *auto-da-fé* of Ljubinje, the blame must be laid at the door, not of the poor wretches who perpetrated these enormities, but of the tyrants who have

brutalised them for centuries ; just as the worst horrors of the French Revolution were but a counter-stroke to the accumulated misdeeds of the despotism that had preceded it."

Something like 200,000 fugitives fled from the Herzegovina, the majority making their way to Montenegro and Serbia, others crossing the Dalmatian frontier. During the three years that elapsed between the outbreak of the revolution at Nevesinje and the occupation by Austria more than 90,000 of that unfortunate people died from cold, starvation and famine.

Consul Homes, in a letter to the Earl of Derby, says: " I would here remark that contrary to that asserted in so many newspapers, the people of the Herzegovina neither demand, nor have ever desired an impossible autonomy, as Serbian agitators would have persuaded them to do, they only ask to remain subjects of the Sultan, with reformed laws and a proper and just administration of them ; how to secure this is the difficulty." And as we shall pass over the identical ground where the recent fighting took place, this history is doubly interesting.

One could spend days wandering about Mostar and reconstructing in the mind its grievous history, for one can almost fancy wicked old Ali and his blood-loving Zaptiehs parading the narrow streets, or driving in from the surrounding country some miserable procession of Christians, whose heads were soon to decorate the hideous palisade. Mr. Stillman, in 1876, found very different quarters here. " The khans are as poor and dirty as can be, and we only found lodgings on the ground floor of the principal one, in a room ordinarily devoted to the stable boys. Tower and gateway, jalousies and bazaars, dirty and narrow streets crowded with soldiers and officers, pack-horses and Bashi-Bazooks in fez and turban, what every Turkish town is, in effect,

Mostar is ; but poor and shabby inside, as beautiful and pictorial from without."

Thus musing we lingered upon the stone parapet of the old Dream Bridge till late, and as the sun sank over the mountains of Hum each mosque stood silhouetted against a lurid sky of deep orange. Upon the circular parapets of each graceful minaret appeared the dark outline of a priest, leaning upon the white balustrade and waiting—waiting—till in a few minutes there rings out the *muezzin.* "Allah-la allah"—the soft voices pleaded. "There is no god but God . . . L'allah il Allah-Hu." There was something so weirdly beautiful in the mystic scene that we remained enchanted, revelling in a pleasure it would be impossible to attempt to define and losing all count of time. Busily the priests are arranging the twinkling lights, some all huddled together and facing Mecca, others divided equally to the four winds of heaven.

Quickly, far too quickly, the orange faded, the Narenta lapsed into impenetrable darkness beneath us, and the sky began to be filled by the lamps of God, and around, the bracelets of glimmering lights shone to remind the Faithful to give thanks to Allah. Silently we wended our way back, passing through the now deserted bazaar, the air oppressed with that typical odour of steaming coffee, tobacco, leather and spices that fills the nostrils in every bazaar in Turkey, and between the high walls with their vivid remembrances ; here and there flitted the black forms of the veiled women, silent and morose, detaching themselves like ghosts from the shadow of the houses. In the darkness we stumble against strange figures, who melt away before us. Our minds are full of wondrous dreams ; we forget the hurry and noise of the world without—for the glory of the night and the magic of the East have entered into our hearts, holding us enthralled in their enchantment.

CHAPTER IX

TO THE ADRIATIC

CHOICE OF ROADS—WE LEAVE AT SUNRISE—BUNA—STEPANOGRAD—INTO THE HERZEGOVINA—NEVESINJE—DESERT OF GACKO—IN TOUCH WITH MONTENEGRO—BELIK—HISTORY OF SANDALJ—TREBINJE—PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE LATE UPRISING—A DRIVE INTO THE SUN—ADRIA—RAGUSA.

TO reach Ragusa and the Adriatic the traveller can follow three routes from Mostar. One continues along the Narenta to its mouth at Metković and then along the coast via Cannosa. Another cuts almost directly across the land, via Stolac and Ljubinje (of fateful memory), the third and last heads straight for the Montenegran frontier, following it via Nevesinje, Gacko, Bilek and Trebinje to the sea. The first, via Metković, is the one we had decided to return by from Ragusa, and the second Sheila and I had done twice last year. The road is excellent, though for twenty miles before Trebinje very narrow. So we chose the last, mainly on account of the places lying in our path, and again because of its position, so close to the wildest parts of the Montenegran frontier, parts that could be seen in no other way. The distance is great (for Herzegovinian travellers) one hundred and thirty-five miles, and, as our maps showed that we should traverse the great Nevesinje desert of bare limestone, it behoved us to make as early a start as possible, so as to be sure of being able to complete our journey. There-

fore, we gave orders to be called early on the morning of our departure.

The day was just breaking as Mercédès stood murmuring gently at the door. The sun, rising behind the bare and barren hills to the east, diffused a mystic light upon the silent town; here and there the tiny lights from the graceful minarets blinked and glimmered, as though having just been disturbed from their night's rest. We could see the silent figures of the priests upon the balconies, their faces turned towards the east, meditating while waiting with Moslem patience for the sun's first gleams to give the call to prayer. A few clouds, light as thistledown, hung suspended in the warm sky, and catching the light of the rising sun long ere it reached us, were touched with the most delicate shades of pink.

Even as we left the hotel door the first sunbeam reached the two great forts upon the opposite hills, so that they shone like polished gold. With the familiar musical and plaintive cry of the priests resounding in our ears, we were borne swiftly through the half-awakened town. Glancing down one of the narrow lanes of the bazaar upon our right we caught, as we flashed past, one never-to-be-forgotten view of the classic bridge, and the next moment our attention was riveted upon the road. That ride to the sea was like a vivid dream, a mirage of changing scenes. One moment amidst life and colour, the warmth and sunshine of the East, next upon a barren landscape worthy of the frozen North; one moment all the richness of a Southern clime surrounds us, only to give place the next to a land blasted by utter bleakness.

Leaving the long straggling street of Mostar, the road passes along the flat valley for some few miles, and follows the water we had accompanied from the rugged Ivan Pass. Just before reaching Blagaj the road turns sharply to the left, and to the left again, and we perceive

the commencement of the noble mountain pass erected by Austria to enable her to transport troops and cannon to the Montenegran frontier.

To our right and left, as the different summits catch the first rays of the sun, we spy fort after fort, many surrounded by miles of barbed wire conspicuous to the naked eye, and here and there upon some narrow path the sun catches the steel of sentries' bayonets. The road is magnificent, and the finest during the whole tour up to the present; clinging to the face of the precipice mountain, it ascends one side of the valley. Beneath us, we can see a handful of stone huts, all that remains of ancient Blagaj, once the capital of the Herzegovina, and at the foot of a great spur of rock, where, over eight hundred feet in height, is perched upon the tiny summit the beautiful old ruin of Stepanograd. Nature, aided by her centuries of time, has so transformed the powerful walls and heavy turrets that at first sight one can hardly distinguish them from the brown rock.

Once upon a time this was a vast fortress, built by that most mighty and puissant lord, Stephen, Duke of St. Sava, during the height of his power, when he ruled the Herzegovina as its first universal lord. Upon the subject of Bogomiles he broke away from his nominal allegiance to the King of Bosnia, and welcomed the persecuted subjects of the unfortunate Tomascević about the year 1443. Twenty years later the great castle fell into the hands of Mustapha, Beg of Bosnia, through the cowardice of the sons of the great duke, who, though brave enough in numbers to despoil their father of his dukedom, were unable to scrape together enough spirit to defy the Moslem even from behind such walls.

The castle is a medieval marvel. Upon every side its walls are built upon the very edge of the precipice, leaving a space that only a chamois could hope to gain footing upon. Here and there enormous boulders of

rock hang suspended, as though threatening to hurl themselves down upon the valley beneath. In more recent days, about 1831, the infamous Ali Beg Rizvan-begović (Ali Pasha of hateful memory) was shot by order of Omar Pasha at his home on the Buna (the foot of this precipice). The river Buna is one of the miracles of this fairyland. At the foot of a gigantic basin, amidst a circle of precipices, the river emerges in full force from some underground cavern. Where the Buna is born none know, though the peasants who call this spot " the accursed " tell how, thirty years ago, corpses appeared frequently, having been hurled into some stream a score miles distant upon the great limestone plains above.

There is a legend connected with this spot that is typical of the Herzegovina; it is to the effect that once an ancient inhabitant of Blagaj was astounded to see a walking-staff suddenly appear in the Buna, and still more astonished to recognise it as belonging to his son, who was a shepherd somewhere upon the other side of the mountains. The old man, with commendable foresight, sent for his son and instructed him to kill a sheep and throw its body into the river he had lost his staff in. This was done, and lo! the wise father gleefully recovered a dead sheep from the Buna. Day by day the same thing occurred, and the old gentleman waxed joyful over the success of his strategy. But his joy was of short duration; the owner of the sheep, finding his flock diminishing at an alarming rate, and feeling that it was time for himself to take a hand in the game, soon discovered the artifice, with the result that next day the old father, waiting expectantly for a dead sheep to appear, was terrified by the sudden appearance instead of the decapitated body of his own son, the shepherd. I believe he died straightway. This is but one of the many strange legends told by the folk of this " the accursed " spot.

Swiftly Mercédès bears us onwards and upwards, for we are now upon the climb, and the road is slipping from beneath our wheels, as we are propelled up the long rise at a speed which brings the blood to the cheeks and makes the eyes sparkle. She, beloved she, was taking the gradient upon the third. Quickly the valley narrows beneath us, and upon the opposite side, still high above the road, rises the stately old castle, gazing serenely from its rocky eminence down upon the flat plain, and the blue haze of the mountains of Bosnia in the distance, as though meditating upon the centuries of bloodshed that have passed beneath its war-honoured battlements. Sheila badly wanted to photograph the old castle, but we perceived upon a neighbouring summit two wicked-looking modern forts frowning down threateningly at us, and I recollected that we were, no doubt, the object of present interest to the watchful sentinels within and the focus of many glasses. Here, where Austria rules, every stranger is looked upon as an enemy until he proves himself otherwise—for it is whispered that other powers than the Dual Empire look with longing eye upon these fair lands, and it behoves those now in possession to watch and guard with jealous zeal the immense work they have so successfully undertaken.

Still climbing, the road mounts steadily, following the inequalities of the hill-side in serpentine fashion; the opposite side of the valley grows nearer and nearer; the ground between rises rapidly until, when the valley has contracted so that its two sides almost touch, the end is blocked by a barren grey mountain, which rears its huge shape as an effective barrier to further progress. Austrian road-makers have a delightful way of treating such barriers, and without hesitation the road is carried, by aid of long zigzags, step by step up the face of the hill.

Turn succeeded turn, and, looking down into the valley we had ascended, we perceived that we had climbed far

above the old castle, and that a new range of barren mountains had come into view beyond, towards Dalmatia. As we ascended, the mountain became barer and barer, even scanty green shrubs finding it hard to gain enough earth to thrive on. The air was exceedingly chilly, for we had already ascended some two thousand feet above Mostar. The few peasants we met were still in the same wild costumes, the men with large red turbans, white baggy trousers, thick leggings, scarlet sashes, belts and knives, coloured waistcoats, a large heavy white sheepskin cloak reaching to the knees. The only visible difference between the sexes was that the women wore the red turbans wound round their heads and tied under the chin ; otherwise, in their matted hairy cloaks, top boots and trousers, it was hard to distinguish between them ; all possessed the broad hard face of the Slav, tanned and weather-beaten, almost black, and they stood immovable as we flashed past.

Upon the summit the road runs for some distance upon the level, picking its way carefully between great rocky boulders, which seem to have been spread in every direction as though the children of giants had been at play. Here and there a few huts of the poorest description, hardly distinguishable from their bleak surroundings; many are, to all appearances, mere haystacks, some having the sides of black basket-work and the roofs of dirty straw ; the entrance is very low and narrow, and the great, tall, muscular peasants have literally to crawl inside upon their hands and knees. Once we passed a small hillock on our left, on whose summit stood a small stone fort, and the sun glints from off the bright steel of the bayonets of many watchful sentinels upon its plain walls. Soon after passing this lonely little garrison the road reaches a further rise and is sheltered for some distance by heavy trees, which offer a very welcome protection from the biting wind, blowing

with great force upon our right hand. Here we met many quaint figures driving their herds of sheep and goats to their barren pastures. As Rodgers sounded the horn they took no notice of it, the wind and their heavy cloaks preventing them from hearing. It was not until we were close upon them that they looked round and then frantically drove their herds off the road on to the rock-strewn hill-side. As we passed, they raised their hands to their heads and shouted a guttural welcome, gazing in delighted wonder at our sudden appearance.

Just where the road emerges from the trees it reaches the highest point, three thousand five hundred feet above Mostar, and reveals a view more savagely barren even than the plains of old Castile. Not even a tree relieves the grey monotony which, five hundred feet below us, stretches unbroken for some ten miles, till it reaches a range of jagged, pitiless mountains through which we must pass. Immediately at the bottom of the five-hundred-foot descent lies Nevesinje, and in a few moments we come in sight of its tiny streets, literally bristling with soldiers; forts and fortifications surround us upon every side; fatigue parties are digging trenches here, raising walls there, and the whole place hums with busy life. This is Nevesinje the famous, the place whence the tyrannies of the Sultan's tax-gatherers and the bloodthirsty Zaptiehs drove the Christians to refuge in Montenegro; where the Moslems raided the Government armoury and butchered the few remaining peasants left in the town; where the refugees, returning, took such an ample revenge upon the murderers, and where the Pasha sent troops with orders to slay every Christian encountered. Thus at Nevesinje was started the last great revolution, not by the Christians, as was given out, but by the Turks themselves, that civil war with its incredible horrors and undying hate—the Christians with centuries of cruel wrongs to avenge, the Moslems with a free hand

to slay every unbeliever they could take—a revolution that drew upon Bosnia and the Herzegovina the eyes of Europe, and which was eventually ended by Austria generously sending troops to stop the horrors.

Passing through the busy streets, it is hard to realise the bloody deeds that have taken place—for now all has changed, the Nevesinje of Turkish days has vanished; there is but one small mosque to be seen, a large barracks more than trebles the population, and every third person one meets is in uniform. Sappers and miners, horse, foot and artillery are all represented. Officers in light blue and silver march smartly about, and the ordinary "Tommy" apparently spends most of his life with one hand glued to the rim of his cap. But one and all look well and fit to defend what they erect.

From Nevesinje the road cuts straight across the barren plain. The icy blast was blowing at right angles to our course, and seared our faces with its harsh lash till they burned as though exposed to a great heat. The few peasants we encountered were completely enveloped in their large skin cloaks, and it was impossible to rightly guess their sex. Where the plain ends the road is enveloped by the hills and enters a long defile, following the dried-up bed of a river and climbing up a wild ravine.

This valley seems interminable; we are for ever speeding round giant semicircles till one feels almost dizzy, and it is a relief when we have passed through the grey-blue hills and find ourselves entering an immense plain, similar to the one we had crossed, but a very giant in comparison. Some two thousand five hundred feet above sea-level, it stretches as far as the eye can see, like an inland ocean, bounded by naked peaks, the Alps of Montenegro. Yonder, far away, is the frontier, the mountains that spelt salvation and hope to the Christian fugitives from Moslem oppression—the mountains from

"DREARY DESERT ALL AROUND. TABLELANDS AND MOUNTAINS HIGH." (GREAT PLAIN OF GACKO)

whose fastnesses emerged the sturdy Montenegrans eager to give war to the Turk and to strike a blow for their brothers of the Herzegovina.

The desolation is intense ; for this is the great desert of Gatsko—renowned for its devastating storms, terrible in its reputation for war and pillage. Here snow lies deep from the middle of November until June ; for seven bitter months the whole surface is white-edged with snowy peaks. There is sung an old folk-song, in which a maiden of the fertile plains responds to her suitor of Gatsko, who asks her to elope with him.

"Stories many I have heard
Of the country all round Gatsko,
Dreary desert all around,
Tablelands and mountains high,
And between naught else save rocks.
Snow lies there perpetually,
No sun's rays can melt it ever—
Thither follow I no lover."

Upon descending to the level of this immense plain we notice instantly a change in the dress of the people, as though by magic they commence to partake of the savage splendour of the East, a variety of colours being the chief aim. The women had discarded their male attire and donned skirts ; usually they wear an apron of bright scarlet, edged with yellow, a blue or white skirt, light bodice, short Eton coat brilliantly embroidered, and small round caps covered with silver coins. Their hair is neatly parted ; and over their shoulders is a cloak of white or red cloth. Many wore large silver buckles on their waist-belts, huge, ungainly ornaments, as were their many rings and bracelets. The men too had altered, though many still wore the red turban or fez. They had dispensed with their long skin cloaks, and now wore a graceful white or light blue coat hanging from the shoulders to the knees, open all the way down the

front to display an embroidered vest and deep blue pants, ending in tight white gaiters and a pair of hide shoes. A brilliant sash round the waist, from which protrude the hafts of several very business-like knives, completes the picture. For a few moments I was puzzled as to where I had before seen the same dress, and then in a flash I remembered—Montenegro a year before. Many men wore the small round hat of Montenegro, black silk with a crown of red, on which King Nikolas' initials are engraven in Greek letters surrounded by five circles of gold thread. Again I was puzzled ; there was something lacking in the whole costume, some essential and familiar part was missing. It was Sheila who instantly solved the problem. " Not a man has got his gun with him," she said quickly. It was true. There is little love lost between Austria and Montenegro, and the officials of the Dual Empire make it compulsory for the Montenegran to leave his revolver at the frontier, and his belt looks sadly lost without it ; for the patriot of Montenegro in his own country never for a moment parts with his gun, and the Austrian Government upon this point is as adamant.

Near the spot where this immense plain almost reaches the mountains in Montenegro lies the little village of Gacko, filled with soldiers and quaintly dressed inhabitants. Numerous Montenegrans are to be seen dotted about the streets, their fine figures and strong faces set off to full advantage by their dress.

One almost wonders how people can exist in such a place, lost to the great world without, away from the hum of busy civilisation, and yet to the uncouth dwellers in the straw huts on those cruel hills, this collection of small white houses must be their idea of " town." What would they say, could they see the traffic of London, the boulevards of Paris, the dream cities of Italy ! Surely it is better that they live and die here than that they see

these things for a short time, only to be snatched away by a cruel fate to a living death, back to the desert in which they were born. Gacko saw much of the fighting during the insurrection and played no mean part in it. At Gacko the road ends; the Austrians have wisely refrained from carrying it right to the Montenegran frontier, lest that warlike race should resent the familiarity and seize, with almost Irish quickness, the chance of a fight. From Gacko the road cuts away at right angles, following the line of the frontier and crossing a desolate region. Says Ashboth: "A rocky desert, replete with heroic memories, in which a whole army of primeval tombstones lie—such is the road from Gacko to Trebinje."

Our way cuts straight across this wondrous plain not far from the Montenegran frontier. A strong wind was now blowing from behind us, and whenever we halted to allow a herd of half-wild cattle to pass we were enveloped by the clouds of dust that our passage had evoked. After nearly half an hour's fast running, we came to the end of the level plain; the road entering more broken country, intersected by seemingly never-ending mounds of rocks, and ascending and descending continually, in serpentine fashion. While descending a long twisty hill a front tyre burst with a noise that sent a thousand echoes rumbling from rock to rock, far away in the distance, and selecting a spot sheltered from the cutting blast, we alighted to replace it by a new one and at the same time enjoy lunch.

In many countries, Italy especially, it is often next to impossible to find a spot far from the (sometimes very) "madding crowd," and one feels like a hungry animal being fed at the Zoo. The audience often does not content itself with watching every mouthful carefully down the throat, but makes pointed remarks, and becomes a positive nuisance. But we must pay the people of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, Moslem and Christian.

the compliment of saying that they were the very best-behaved people we ever lunched in the presence of, during our wanderings through Europe generally, excepting, of course, Spain.

Our audience in the present instance consisted of some few picturesque peasants tending their flocks, which were spread over a large area of arid country on our left. Very soon they were joined by a Montenegran caravan returning home to the mountains. This consisted of about a dozen mules laden with heavy packs, half a dozen women and as many men, all in the costume of their country—long coloured coats hanging gracefully from the shoulders, baggy blue trousers, tight felt leggings, brilliant embroidered vests, and around the waist a gorgeous sash. Two large knives are thrust through this sash, but the right hand of the men instinctively strays to an empty space where their revolver should be, as though restless at its unusual absence. This first real glimpse of Montenegro was very welcome, and we gazed with interest at these descendants of warriors, almost as closely as they inspected us. Of their language, which to all intents and purposes is Russian, I knew a few sentences, and endeavoured to make them understand the wonders of Mercédès and the land she had brought us from. England they soon understood, and the expression of evident pleasure they evinced very plainly showed how grateful they were to the land which had, through Mr. Gladstone, stood so firm a friend to this oppressed race of heroes, and gave to them their seaports, Dolcigno and Antivari. Gravely they watched the changing of the covers, and were delighted with the wonders of the lunch-basket ; the two-minute kettle-boiler, that produced such excellent soup at so short a notice, they regarded as almost supernatural. We had a good supply of Bovril and fresh water, so were able to offer them a large basin of soup. Each of the men took a sip, and enjoyed it

immensely; cigars and cigarettes followed, and the "Tower of Babel" was alone responsible for a lifelong friendship not being established.

Lunch over, and all packed, Rodgers started the engine, much to their delight, though at the same time every mule bolted for its life. They were soon captured, however, the men running after them, and springing from rock to rock like alpine chamois. Amidst many unintelligible but no less sincere farewells we resumed our way, leaving the lonely party to continue their homeward path.

Ever the same interminable waste of bleak limestone stretches around us. Well is the desolate plain of Gacko named "Voice of the Dead," a name earned by the centuries of blood shed upon this desert of stones, over which a strange silence for ever broods. Here and there are the remains and melancholy ruins of feudal castles, whose fierce inmates claimed allegiance from the country folk around, now dead and forgotten. The keen wind whistles drearily through the great gaps in their walls, and they are the prey of the weeds and foul grass which are gradually hiding their remains from view.

We are travelling along the Montenegran frontier, far away over the endless limestone alps; before us lies the blue and sparkling Adriatic, a name only to the people of the Karst. Very soon we reach the end of the Gatsko Polje, and our road finds its way over the bare Kobila-Glava in a series of great windings. We are now near a small hamlet of stone huts, called, I think, Tzrnitza, and chiefly interesting from its close connection to the Fort Kljutsh, that ruined castle belonging to King Sandalj, one of the greatest of the Bogomile chiefs during the reign of Tvrtko II and the real founder of what is now known as the Herzegovina. Like an eagle's nest, it stands upon the extreme pinnacle of a cone-shaped mountain silhouetted against a sky of intense blue, a

jagged outline that once defied not only the Turks, but also the kings of Bosnia.

King Sandalj came of the warrior race of the Kozatsha, and he first figures in history as a simple Bosnian landowner, who, with the aid of his friends, carried on a private and very successful guerrilla warfare with the powerful family of Sankovitshs, the then rulers of this land of Chlum. Bringing this war to a successful and at the same time remunerative conclusion, Sandalj ruled a fair portion of the land he had wrested. This was about the year 1404, when the names of Herzegovina and Montenegro were unknown, the former going under the title of Chlum and the latter, the ancient province of Dioclea, being known as Zeta. About two years later we find Sandalj in league with Venice against Hungary, and to avoid the fortress of Ostrovitza in Croatia, part of his wife's dowry, falling into Sigismund's hands, Sandalj wisely sold it to Venice. His power grew by leaps and bounds, and in 1412 Sigismund invited his enemy, as an honoured guest, to be present at Buda during the visit of King Ladislaus. Sandalj promptly accepted and, accompanied by a picked collection of the bravest lances of Bosnia, journeyed to the capital, where he and his knights carried all before them in the great military tournament held in the Polish king's honour.

In 1416 the Turks invaded the land as far as Ragusa, but could never capture Kljutsh. There is a fairy legend which tells how to avoid surrender. Sandalj blocked up the exit of a subterranean stream, which issues from the rocks close by and flows for a short distance only to disappear into the earth and reappear none knows where —perhaps in the Buna. Lacking an exit, the waters rose foot by foot, completely filling the whole Golinjev Dol and the great Gatsko Polje, and the castle of Kljutsh alone remained above the waters. It also says that to

A FIRST GLIMPSE OF MONTENEGRO. (PLAIN OF GACKO. HERZEGOVINA)

this day one can find iron rings buried in the decayed wall, to which ships were fastened.

This, of course, is a fable, but one of the many tales spun round this mystic castle. However, in spite of his heroic resistance for three years, Sandalj was forced at last to surrender to the Sultan, who, charmed by such bravery, accorded him much honour and demanded only his nominal allegiance. Sandalj was now virtually king of the country of Chlum, and practically severed all connections with the Bosnian throne. He set about establishing himself even more firmly and demanded homage from every family of Chlum. Those not complying with his demands he promptly, and with commendable foresight, exterminated. Sandalj was a Bogomile by birth and ruled with all a Bogomile's severity. His uncle it was whom Tvrtko sent in command of the Bogomilian army to conquer Croatia and who fought so valiantly at Kossovo. In 1433, when Tvrtko carried on war with his brother-in-law George Brankovitsh, the Serbian despot, and was finally beaten, Sandalj proclaimed himself King of Bosnia. Though opposed in Bosnia, he was supreme in Chlum, and it was this last inheritance that he bequeathed to his nephew, Stephen Vuktshitsh, whom Frederic III afterwards recognised as the first Duke of St. Sava and Lord of what became known as the Herzegovina. It was this powerful duke who built the great castle of Stepanograd, whose ruins we had passed after leaving Mostar this morning at Buna.

Thus on this wild spot we have seen how there arose in the Middle Ages one strong man, from small estate, into a mighty ruler, who by the help of his own right arm and quick genius, was able to transform the unimportant land of Chlum into the vast Herzegovina, and to leave to his descendants such a glorious inheritance.

Still traversing the same interminable rocks, we pass

through the tiny hamlet of Korito or the " Caldron." A small white mosque is sufficient to show the religion of its inhabitants ; and the narrow windows, mere slits, and low stone walls, all speak eloquently of the repeated attacks upon the Moslem by their hereditary foes of Montenegro. The instant we leave the last hut Korito disappears like magic, for at but a very short distance the huts of the peasants are quite indistinguishable, built as they are of the same interminable grey as their surroundings.

We now pass through a land rich in its savage beauty and dotted here and there with innumerable Bogomile tombs—great massive stones, some sunken upon one side, others nearly buried from sight. The enormous weight of the stones was necessary in order to preserve the dead from the ravages of wolves. After many long ascents and descents the road cuts its way into the Bilek Polje, which, though much smaller, is similar to the great Gatsko Polje. Surrounded upon every side by cold, grey, pitiless mountains, close to the frontier of Montenegro, Bilek lies. The inhabitants are mostly Orthodox, though a mosque has been built for the few Moslems. The original mosque was utterly wiped out by a Montenegran raid, and, as everywhere upon the Karst, each stone and ruined monument whispers tales of blood and war.

We are now in the heart of the country which barely thirty years ago was struggling in the throes of the last great revolution. Turkish troops occupied every town, fighting fiercely with the armed band of Christians. Can one wonder that Prince Nikolas was unable to restrain his people from going to aid their brothers of the faith so hardly pressed by the Moslem ? For the two peoples are akin, belonging to the one Slav race and under the thumb of the same Church. Each have many cruel wrongs to avenge, and bitter scores to pay off, therefore it is hardly wonderful that the certain chance of much

real fighting proved too strong for the warrior nation to resist. Reading Stillman's *The Late Uprising in Herzegovina*, every stone brings back vividly the many stirring passages in his writings. So incensed was Turkey at the successful help given by Montenegro that she commanded troops to advance against that country from Skutari.

Bilek is full of interest, its name signifying " omen." During the armistice between the contending parties in 1876, whilst the Porte was supposed to be endeavouring to conciliate the insurgents by Wassa Effendi's promises of protection to non-combatants, a Turkish patrol entered Bilek and wantonly slew seven Christians in cold blood, four women and three men, and carried the decapitated heads about the streets upon the points of their weapons ; this but thirty years ago. When one looks upon the still savage country, as it is to-day, and marks the progress and life of the people, the absolute security in which they live, the equality each race can claim, it is not hard to realise what a boon the Austrian rule has proved. The Christians of Southern Bosnia and the Herzegovina are entirely Orthodox and patriotic to a fault, still believing that one day they shall form the heart of a great Serb nation, that another Dushan will come and the next Kossovo prove the acme of their hopes. To our eyes they seem contented and happy under the present Government. That Government, however, is Catholic, and can therefore never expect to establish a perfect understanding. Austria has undoubtedly done wonders for these countries, built roads and railways, schools and courts of justice, placed all creeds upon a perfect equality—in other words has given them civilisation.

Soon after leaving Bilek the road commences to climb in real earnest, rising in sharp zigzags between immense rocks of cooled lava. Near here is the Trebintshitza, which, far beneath, emerges in full stream from out of a

huge limestone cavern and takes a wide sweep towards Montenegro; completing a half-circle, it crosses the Popovo Polje, and having passed through Trebinje as suddenly vanishes into a great hole in the ground. What happens to this rush of water after it has been swallowed up none can tell; it may emerge two thousand feet below at Ragusa or Metković, or perchance go to the Buna. It is one of the many wonders of the Karst.

Quickly we continue our climb, the road wending its eccentric course among the sharp rocks and skirting deep precipices. Far beneath us we can see the arid waste lying uninhabited to the eye, the huts of the people, as I mentioned before, being of the same uniform grey; and it is only when one is almost upon them that they take shape from their surroundings and seem to spring up like ghosts only to vanish as such directly they are left behind. For upwards of a thousand feet or so we ascend, turn succeeding turn, ever the same dull-coloured rock, till the summit is reached, and we are again descending into an unrelieved plateau of bleak limestone that again stretches in every direction around us.

Ascents and descents follow each other in quick succession, till finally we come to the long descent that leads down from the high plateau to Trebinje in one magnificent sweep. The road is beautifully engineered, and the change from the stricken regions of the Karst to the tropical vegetation of the Trebintshitza is almost miraculous. The road leading down into the valley was crowded, a long procession of peasants returning from market with droves of mules and cattle, sheep and goats. Our appearance caused almost a panic as we silently coasted down the long descent on the brakes. We had much difficulty in passing, the animals one and all endeavouring to bolt back the way they had come. But the peasants are not like many one meets, frightened

of their animals ; they are hardy and full of the spirit that enabled them to rise up under oppression. Promptly and firmly the frightened animals were hurried past, at the same time hats were doffed and a cheery welcome shouted. One thing that throughout our tour struck us in particular was the universal welcome we received from every class. After one has motored through Sweden, Denmark and North Germany it is quite refreshing to greet a people who, though unaccustomed to an auto, welcome the stranger in such an open and hearty manner. I am inclined to believe that it is the very novelty of the thing that appeals to them.

Trebinje, lying far beneath us, looks doubly inviting, standing upon both banks of the cool stream ; tall minarets rise up from out the white mass of houses. The swift-flowing river is welcome to the eyes, relieving the incessant grey expanse, for this is the first sight of pure running water since leaving the Narenta. Trebinje is the last Moslem town we shall see ; in less than an hour we shall have quitted the Herzegovina and entered Dalmatia. For the last time we pass through the Moslem bazaar, smell the sweet Turkish coffee and see the white-turbaned priests, then turn our faces due west. Trebinje tempts the photographer, but every mountain summit proclaims by its wire-enshrouded fort how serious would be the offence in Austrian eyes, and we restrain our ardour and save our kodaks.

Trebinje lies in a very garden of loveliness, barely one thousand feet above the sea. The sun's rays, aided by the green waters, have produced a tiny paradise, where tobacco plants grow in the utmost profusion ; here and there the waving red blossoms of the pomegranate mingle with the green fig-trees, vines grow almost wild, and everywhere we are surrounded by signs of a Southern clime. It is hard to realise that this little oasis is surrounded by the towering plains and mountains of naked

limestone ; that did the stream find another outlet ere it reaches its great subterranean cavern this fertile valley would become a grey desert.

There is little to remind the traveller that this sleepy town is one of the most historical in the present Herzegovina. Even at the time of the Roman conquest an important centre must have been where Trebinje stands to-day. When the Græco-Roman Republic Epidaurus was at the height of its power, and when at last its ashes gave birth to modern Ragusa, the Emperor Constantine mentions Trebunia as one of the great Slav towns, and that a Slavonic prince held court there. In the Middle Ages Trebinje lay upon that great highway that in thirty days led from Ragusa to Constantinople. When the mighty Dushan arose Trebinje fell under Serbian dominion, but after the great Tzar's death, in 1355, the town was seized by one powerful family after another, among them that of our old friend Sandalj and his successor Stephen, Duke of St. Sava.

In latter days Trebinje played a great part in the revolution of 1876, and is of course associated with the names of Ljubibratics and Peko Pavlovics, the powerful insurgent chiefs. Soon after the insurrection started, as will be remembered, at Nevesinje the Christians of the Herzegovina rose as one man. Ljubibratics, a native of a village near by, who had spent his boyhood in Dalmatia, and had taken part in the revolution of '62, returned from Serbia. Prince Nikolas of Montenegro, finding that he was powerless to withhold his fearless subjects, and being unprepared just then for war with the Porte felt that unless the revolution subsided he must at any cost join forces with the rebels, dispatched Peko Pavlovics, an old and wise Montenegran warrior, skilled in many a fierce fight with the Turks, to try and put an end to the trouble. Peko went about the task in a manner thoroughly characteristic of himself: finding that Ljubi-

bratics was the draught that fanned the flame, he promptly seized him, tied his hands behind him, put a revolver to his back, and marched him, without loss of time, across the Dalmatian frontier to Ragusa. The Turkish Government, instead of fostering a chance of peaceful settlement, deliberately set about further butchering of the already desperate Christians. Peko, finding to his disgust that his splendid feat had produced no peace, released Ljubibratics and joined the Christian insurgents himself with a party of war-loving Montenegrans. Ljubibratics, though a man of much personal charm, a dreamer and a fervent patriot, did not possess sufficient military knowledge, and his polished manner, while attracting many French and Italian recruits, alienated from him the fierce fighters of Montenegro, who were unable to appreciate his refined talents. How he fought to the last and finally, being captured, was sent to Spalato, are facts of history and have been recounted vividly by Mr. Stillman, who knew the ill-fated leader personally.

Slowly we passed through the town, taking our last view of Turkey in Europe. Before dusk we should leave this enchanted land. It was with a feeling almost of sadness that we passed through the small bazaar and looked our last upon the cross-legged figures squatting upon the floor. The Crescent would now give way to the Cross, and with this thought in our minds Mercédès bore us regretfully out of Trebinje.

The road traverses a flat plain covered thickly with small rocks and green shrub, offering splendid cover for an advancing army, and indeed this very spot ran red with Moslem blood in 1876. Hussein Pasha, blockaded in Trebinje by the insurgents and Montenegran volunteers, dispatched a strong detachment of infantry to attack the rebel camp, and this Moslem troop was skilfully led into an ambush by Peko. Upon the very place we were now crossing the Turkish troops were utterly annihilated ;

the insurgents, following the recognised custom of those times, cut off the noses of their fallen foes, while the wounded upon both sides were put to the sword. This gives some conception of the bitter hatred displayed by Moslem and Christian alike.

Mr. Stillman, who was at Ragusa during the troubles, persuaded some fellow-correspondents to drive out to Trebinje a few days after the fight, and tells how he passed over this road; to quote a short passage as he nears Trebinje. "Three Austrian peasants begged the protection of our shadow in abject fear of finding themselves face to face with the terrible Montenegrans. Not a long rifle-shot from the outpost the driver pointed out the locality of the beginning of the great fight . . . the ground was still red with blood in spots along the road. . . . The country gives capital cover . . . a thousand men might lie within one hundred feet of the road and not show a cap. This dreary waste, which I can only compare to a vast glacier turned into stone. . . . The peasants pointed out to us a dead Turkish soldier lying by the roadside." We read of much fighting throughout the Herzegovina, till the severe winter puts a stop to hostilities. About the end of January the weather improves and the fighting commences anew.

Achmet Muktar had replaced the more enlightened Raouf Pasha as chief of the Turks and determined at all costs to put an end to revolution by extinction of the insurgents. Meanwhile the Porte, exasperated by the semi-official aid tendered by Montenegro to the Christians, warned the Prince that as soon as the troubles were at an end Turkey would attack the little kingdom in real earnest. Montenegro, feeling that she might as well be killed for a sheep as a lamb, determined to have her money's worth for the price she must pay, and dispatched 1500 picked warriors out of the army that promptly volunteered for active service under Peko. Ljubibratics had quarrelled

earlier with Peko, who openly derided him, and when Peko and his augmented band arrived at the rebel camp at Grebci he drove Ljubibratics and his followers unceremoniously out. It is interesting to follow Mr. Stillman, word for word, as he narrates the battle that took place upon this plain we are now crossing. " Peko disposed his force on the road between Trebinje and Ragusa. . . . The next day the Turks—five battalions and 400 indigenes and six guns—marched out from Trebinje. . . . [Peko] gave the signal for the attack, which began with about 250 men, increasing, as the other bands came up, to about 800. But at the first shots fired the troops began a precipitate retreat and, firing a few shots behind them, fled in utter disorder back towards Trebinje, the insurgents pursuing and cutting them down. . . .

" The number of Turkish dead left on the road, according to the tale of the noses brought to Peko, was 250. . . . The wind, which was very light, blew from us, and we could see every flash of the rifles on our side of the slope and on the ridge. . . . The fire of the garrison was incessant ; but as both parties were fighting from cover we could not distinguish individuals. . . . The line of assault had moved up to the lower breastwork, and there was a hand-to-hand fight across it, and then the fire of the assailants and defenders could be distinguished again. Here was killed one of the bravest of the brave, Maxime Bacevics, shot through the breast. . . . One man came along walking slowly but alone, with both hands cut across the back, a gash in the neck, and a ball through the thigh, just clearing the hip joint. He showed us, with a grim satisfaction, the nose of the Turk who had given him the cuts, as did several others of the wounded. . . . Peko was still on the battlefield. . . . The firing ceased at sunset, and the body of Maxime was brought in before dark, amid general and evidently heartfelt lamentations. His own men wept like children. . . . ' A thousand Turks

dead would not pay us for Maxime,' was the wail, and old Peko and his men swore a bloody vengeance on the morrow."

During the two days of fighting the total Turkish loss was about 400 killed and 300 wounded, who arrived at Trebinje, those who did not having been put to the sword, after the manner of these battles on both sides. The insurgent loss was about 100 killed and badly wounded, the latter being brought into Ragusa. For a fortnight all remained quiet. Peko held full command of the country between Trebinje and Ragusa. Muktar at Mostar, roused by the reverses, collected all his available forces and marched to give battle to Peko. The Turks had the advantage of numbers, and had they been filled with the fiery spirit of the Montenegrans they would have wiped Peko out, as it was they forced him to retreat on to the Austrian frontier. Here, at Grebci, he held a council of war, while the Turks in fatal indecision politely waited some two thousand yards distant for him to evacuate the village. "The escape of Peko and his band," says Mr. Stillman, "was a real masterpiece of irregular warfare. While Muktar Pasha waited till he should ascertain the movements of the insurgents, not even daring to attack Grebci, where a score or so men only remained, Peko reached the Trebintshitza in the Popovo plain, crossed it, marched on Ljubinje, where he captured a provision train, and then, making a wide circular march through an entirely undefended country, passed between Bilek and Trebinje and reached Zubci without molestation." Thus Peko had his whole force in a country utterly devoid of Turkish troops.

It is curious to turn from Mr. Stillman and to read M. Yriarte's opinion; according to him, Peko was by no means the hero he has been depicted. M. Yriarte accuses Peko and his Montenegrans of treating with the enemy to their own advantage, and he even goes so far

as to accuse them of cutting off the noses of the slain ere commencing battle, as M. Yriarte says, "de rapporter au camp leurs sanglants trophees." It is not Peko, but Ljubibratics, who was the true hero.

I confess I cannot reconcile myself to this opinion; while acknowledging the gentler virtues and steadfast loyalty of Ljubibratics, I think that M. Yriarte has allowed his friendship for the Turks to bias him.

Undoubtedly Peko was uncouth to a degree, rough of speech, coarse of habit and possessing but an elementary knowledge of civilised warfare, yet withal he was a man in every sense of the word, and I feel sorry that he should have been so misjudged.

We stopped in the centre of the rocky plain for tea, and while Rodgers boiled the water we enjoyed the quiet scene and revelled in its past memories. For the last hour or so we had had the sun full in our faces, travelling as we were due west, and as we finished tea it began to sink slowly over the jagged mountains between us and the Adriatic. There now commenced one of the most gorgeous sunsets it has ever been our fortune to witness. Losing no time, we resumed our way, travelling at a fairly high speed, straight into the fading day. Around the dying orb the sky was of the purest gold, gradually tapering to the deepest blue; a few gossamer clouds of a rich salmon-pink shone out in contrast to the blue void. Behind us rose range after range of the mountains we had crossed, the cold bleak Karst now standing out a ruddy red, as though the whole limestone region was heated by an unseen furnace, not unlike the after-glow of the Dolomites. As the sun sank lower and lower the golden light turned quickly to orange and finally to the most vivid flame. The intense purity of the atmosphere and the warm breeze blowing in our faces combined to lay us under a spell of enchantment. The hills before us stood out prominently against the furnace light, their

jagged outlines and sharp contours looking like the teeth of a giant saw.

We are now in Dalmatia. At one place the road passes between two towering rocks, where we are almost blinded by the flaming light full in our eyes, and as we emerge from the grip of the mountains the Adriatic appears 1200 feet directly beneath us. Never can we forget that sight. It is worthy to take its place with the first glimpse of the Bay of Naples, of the Straits of Hercules and the Great Rock seen from the Terifa Pass. Far below, little villages, almost lost in the deep shadows, nestle upon the water's edge, a few islands stand out, black as ink, upon the shining surface of copper, while right out to sea the whole horizon lay glowing with the wonderful shade of flame. I never knew until then what a sunset could be. Words fail to describe a thousandth part of the exquisite beauty of the scene. Nature alone in her wildest and most fantastic mood could have evoked such a combination, and for some minutes we remained absolutely immovable in our seats, drinking in greedily the fast-vanishing scene. Then, as the light quickly faded, we could see the road stretching far beneath us, losing itself in the rapidly enshrouding dusk.

That wild rush down from the mountain heights to the water's edge through the darkening shadows was more dream than reality. Our lamps would have destroyed the magic effect and, unheeding them, we swept round turn after turn, corner after corner. Like spirits riding upon a gust of fairy wind we were borne through the gloaming. On our right the mountains towered up, and the sky, no longer of a warm shade, but illuminated by the silver moonlight, bleak as the Karst itself; the moon, a delicate crescent, worthy of the land we had left, and whose emblem it is, shone out upon our left, to be reflected upon the ripples of the sea in a long silvery streak. Rounding a final bend we come upon a spot

where the road edges a precipice some six hundred feet deep, at whose base the waves splash white among the rocks, and behold a short promontory which twinkles with a myriad of dancing lights, and beyond which stretches a black mass of islands. Soon we distinguish the form of houses flitting past on either hand. Slowly we crawl along, through a maze of fortifications, distinguishing dimly the outline of massive towers and giant walls. Passing under two great gateways we find ourselves in the ancient republic of Ragusa, after one of the most enchanting drives imaginable.

CHAPTER X

THE PEARL OF THE ADRIATIC

RAGUSA—ITS CHARM—HISTORY—MEMORIES OF THE PAST—RAGUSA TO-DAY—BEAUTIES OF POSITION—CLIMATE—LACROMA—ISLE OF THE LION-HEART—MISADVENTURE WITH A STEAM LAUNCH.

TO appreciate the Ragusa of to-day you must know the Ragusa of the Middle Ages—that wonderful little republic which, while great nations and dynasties rose and fell around her, preserved through centuries of war a glorious independence. Rome, Constantinople, Athens and Venice have each in turn to give way before the golden page in the history of the republic of Ragusa. Picture to yourself the old walled town of Todi or Carcassonne set down by the sea, their ancient walls and massive turrets washed by the blue waters. The fortifications of Ragusa are more massive, the walls thicker, and the turrets veritable giants. Everywhere the vegetation is of the most luxuriant growth: great aloe plants grow to enormous proportions from out of the bare rock, lofty palms raise their graceful branches into a sky of lapis-lazuli, spiky cacti and oleanders grow down to the very edge of the lapping waters.

The figures that people her streets to-day are semi-barbaric; scarlet runs riot; and every race, from the modern Austrian official to the roughest Moccali peasant, elbow one another in the narrow ways. In olden days,

RAGUSA, THE PEARL OF THE ADRIATIC

when the site of Ragusa was merely a rocky promontory thrust out into the tumbling waters, there stood upon the further extremity of the next bay to the south the city of Epidaurus, founded by the trading Greeks, where to-day Ragusa Vecchia, a tiny village, stands. About the year 656 great herds of Slavs and Avars, who had besieged the city for five years unsuccessfully, at last carried it by storm with the help of Saracen corsairs from the sea, and sweeping inland all but reached the gates of Constantinople.

The few refugees who managed to escape from Epidaurus sought safety upon the barren rock where Ragusa now stands. They were soon joined by other refugees, driven by the Slavs from other Roman coast cities. Many came from Salona. Later on, when the pirate corsairs of Africa despoiled the Roman towns upon the Bocche di Cattaro, more refugees sought shelter upon the rock.

Thus from its earliest history Ragusa has been a place of refuge. Founding a town upon the hospitable little headland, the half-Roman, half-Grecian refugees built houses and fortified them. For centuries they fought a life-and-death struggle with the African corsairs, adopting a policy followed throughout the eventual history of the republic, by allying themselves to powerful nations —first to Rome and later to the Byzantine Empire. Thus the republic of Ragusa first became known among nations. Richard of England ("Cœur de Lion"), returning from the Holy Land, encountered a fearful gale after leaving Corfu, and, as his ship was being driven upon the rugged shore, vowed that should God permit him to land in safety he would build a church to the Holy Virgin upon that spot. His ship was dashed to pieces upon the rocks of Lacroma, the small island lying opposite Ragusa, but he and his followers escaped with their lives. King Richard was conducted to the city with much

ceremony, and the senate did all in their power to accord him a right royal welcome. So impressed was he by this hospitable city that he petitioned the Pope to be allowed to build his church at Ragusa instead of upon the island of Lacroma. Finding the Pope adamant, he founded the present monastery upon the island, and, borrowing large sums of money, erected the old cathedral at Ragusa, " which," says Appendini, " for regularity of design and beauty of ornament was unequalled in Illyria." This building, renowned for its exquisite beauty, would have been the finest example of medieval architecture in Dalmatia to-day had not the terrible earthquake of 1667, with its irreparable results, completely destroyed the building.

Undoubtedly the rapid rise of Ragusa was mainly due to the splendid boast " that her gates are ever open to the oppressed, and that she never gives up a refugee, no matter how serious her refusal might be to herself." As descendants of refugees themselves, the citizens of Ragusa nobly carried out this proud boast. It seems incredible when one reads of the quixotic deeds performed by the noble little state. Once when the stricken children of the rightful king of Serbia sought asylum in Ragusa from the vengeance of Bodino, the great Zupan of Rascia, Bosnia, and Serbia, Ragusa refused Bodino's demand for their surrender, dead or alive. Bodino was at this time at the height of his power, and with the resources of three great kingdoms at his command thundered forth his alternative—war. Following its traditions, the Senate replied, " that it was the custom of this city to refuse asylum to no man, but to protect everyone who fled in their misfortune." Bodin, enraged by this refusal, endeavoured to destroy the city, hurling force after force against it, only to be rolled back from her great walls. For seven years Ragusa suffered all the horrors of a bitter siege.

THE MASSIVE BATTLEMENTS OF RAGUSA

Again and again one comes across examples where Ragusa was willing to suffer any privation, and endure the ravages of a tyrant within her lands, rather than refuse asylum to those who craved it.

When the widowed Queen Margarita fled to Ragusa to protest against Bogoslave, the King of Dalmatia, that monarch, upon the refusal of the city to give her up, attacked Ragusa with a great army of ten thousand men. But it is during the time that the Byzantine Empire was allied to Ragusa that we find the most heroic example of Ragusian hospitality. Stephen Némanja, the Zupan of Serbia and Racia, who commenced to battle with the Byzantine Emperor, fearing that the tide of war had set against him, actually sent word to the Senate of Ragusa asking if, in the event of his being defeated, he could seek safety within the city's walls. Now it so happened that during his reign this same Stephen Némanja had proved a bitter enemy to Ragusa and had twice laid determined siege to the city. In the present instance he was fighting to the death with the loyal allies of Ragusa, the Byzantine Empire. Yet in spite of this the Senate replied without hesitation that should Stephen and his family seek shelter the city would, as was its custom immemorable, accord him its full protection. With such heroic examples as these, can it be wondered at that this little republic prospered so quickly! Those she protected became her sworn friends, and upon regaining power did not fail to pay off their debt, by bestowing lands and granting valuable privileges to the republic. Thus Stephen, an earlier monarch, in gratitude for Ragusian help, made over to the Senate large tracts of land. Silvester, a Dalmatian king who had received asylum, upon recovering his fallen estate made over the islands of Calmotta, Mezzo and Giupan to Ragusa. Through the gratitude of the Némanjas, Ragusa was enabled to extend her trade throughout Illyria. In the early part of the twelfth

century the republic was forced to call in the aid of Venice, and, though becoming nominally subject to that power, still boasts that she yet retained an absolute independence, never, like her sister cities of the Adriatic, sinking into a mere dependency. Even to-day upon the sculptured gateways you will be struck by the utter absence of the Winged Lion of St. Mark, so familiar at every turn in Spalato, Trau, Zara and others. In its place is carved St. Biagio, the patron saint of Ragusa.

Still, Venetian influence was very beneficial to the city. Arts peculiar to Venice attained a wonderful excellence, and to-day almost pure Italian is spoken by the citizens, in pleasing contrast to the guttural Slavonic of the peasants. As the great Serbian Empire sprang into prominence in the middle of the thirteenth century, Ragusa, true to her policy, transferred her allegiance from Venice to the Great Dushan. When the glittering dream of Dushan collapsed and Hungary wrested Dalmatia from Venice, Ragusa welcomed alliance with that Empire, and yet, while securing her latest ally, Ragusan statesmen, by marvellous, nay, almost miraculous intuition, conceived, a hundred years ere Europe grasped the same fact, the enormous power that the Ottoman Empire would secure in the Balkans. It is recorded how they sent ambassadors to the Sublime Porte and, in return for an annual payment, secured the monopoly of trade with the East, but what was still more important, established a friendly intercourse with the Moslem. This wise policy bore priceless fruits one hundred years later, when Bosnia and the Herzegovina finally succumbed to Bajazed, who honoured the little republic and swore alliance between it and the Porte. The result was of the greatest importance to Ragusa; her trade in the rich products of the East increased enormously, and in the middle of the fourteenth century, when Ragusa was at the summit of her splendour,

THE DOMINICAN CLOISTERS, WHERE ONE MAY WHILE AWAY MANY AN ENCHANTED HOUR. (RAGUSA)

Ragusian ships sailed into every port of the world, her treasury was filled to overflowing, her commercial power was supreme. Cromwell recognised her commercial value and accorded her "Argosees" special privileges in British waters. But for these privileges she had to pay in diverse ways. For instance, in return for her Spanish monopolies, which included that of transporting back to Morocco the exiled Moors, she was forced to equip and fight ships for that country, and when Philip's Armada set sail for England several of the largest galleons were built and manned by Ragusians. Never once did the state attempt to shirk its obligations.

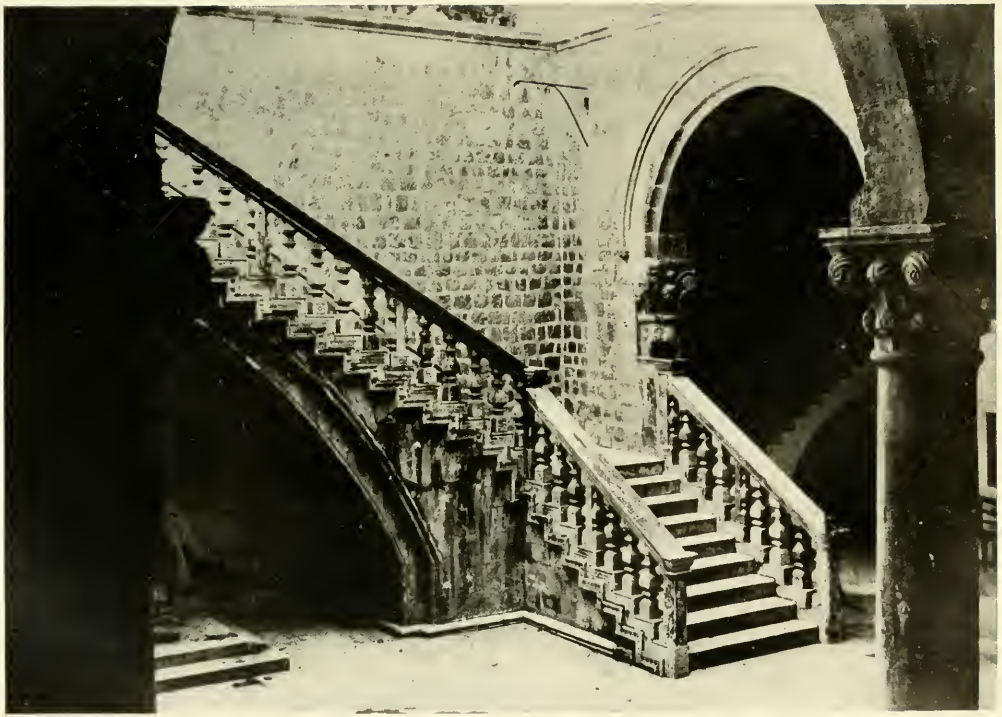
From time immemorable Ragusa was ruled entirely by members chosen from among her nobles; no commoner was ever permitted, or, in fact, ever desired to enter her Senate; and until the terrible year of 1667 Ragusa remained the undisputed queen of the South Adriatic. The year 1667 marks the most appalling calamity that could have happened to Ragusa—the year of the Great Earthquake. The Rector and almost every noble in the city perished beneath the ruins, as did thousands of the inhabitants. Stately buildings, the products of centuries of prosperity, irreplaceable libraries, hundreds of mills and workshops were reduced to a mere heap of refuse; a tidal wave following the first shock, swept into the quiet harbour, crowded with ships from every port, containing the essence of Ragusa's prosperity, and crushed them to powder upon the cruel rocks. To make matters even worse, the wild Morlacci, that savage mountain race whose descendants people the land to-day, seizing the opportunity, raided the ruins and pillaged the unlucky city.

Though nearly two and a half centuries have passed, Ragusa never rallied after this death-blow. Vainly she endeavoured to recover something of her lost glories; the Senate was renewed from among the remaining people,

noble or plebeian. Struggle bravely as she would, never again could Ragusa hold up her head as a "City of the Gods."

Napoleon, in his ambitious thirst for conquest, sweeps onward towards the East, seizing city after city, land upon land, and arrives before the gates of Ragusa demanding her surrender. And what can Ragusa do? Her power vanished, her ships destroyed, her defences useless, she is compelled to open her gates, and in doing so draws upon her unlucky head the wrath of Russia. Egged on by that nation, the war-loving Montenegrans swept remorselessly in one great wave upon the doomed town and the fair land that lay around. Unable to force an entrance into the city itself, they destroyed every palace, house and monument without, trampled down the vineyards and maize-fields, and left the city the centre of a barren desert; while we, the English, considering Ragusa as wholly French, had fortified the island of Lissa, from which our ships could patrol the Dalmatian coast and harrow the Ragusian trade, capturing her "Argosees," and thus destroying all chance of her ever regaining power by depriving her of the very source of her wealth.

Even now the troubles of the republic were not at an end; Napoleon, instead of rewarding her for the loss she had suffered in his cause, behaved with the most intolerant arrogance, taking from her all that remained —her very existence. In founding what he called his Illyrian kingdom, he issued a decree in 1806 which announced to the world that "the Republic of Ragusa has ceased to exist." Her cup of sorrow was not yet filled to the brim. The allied powers added the last drops in 1814, when the once powerful and gallant little republic was handed over, with the rest of Dalmatia, to the tender mercies of Austrian control. So ends a tragedy unique in the history of the world.



THE COURTYARD OF THE RECTOR'S PALACE. (RAGUSA)

It is not my intention here to enlarge upon the glories of Ragusa of to-day, one has only to read the beautiful account written by Mr. Evans in 1876, or that fascinating little book[1] by Mrs. Holback. It would be idle for me to describe the splendours of the palaces, monasteries and churches; the Rector's palace, that small but exquisite rival of the Doge's Palace at Venice; the cathedral, beautiful to a degree, yet not to be compared with the church of the "Lion Heart," lost amidst the earthquake; the Dominican cloisters, where one may dream away many an enchanted hour while the white-robed brothers pass by in silent meditations; the Franciscan church, and equally beautiful cloisters. It would only be repetition.

There is yet another glorious boast of Ragusa, to the effect that while she was the one spot of Christendom in the vast sea of Moslem conquest, never for an instant did the faith of her citizens waver. The church bells have tolled and masses been sung without cessation, yet their peaceful monks were true sons of Ragusa and could fight as stoutly as they could pray. For many centuries each order was given full command of a different gateway into the city to fight to the death, if needs be.

Modern times have not spoilt the Ragusa of to-day. The quaintest mixture of medievalism and civilisation is presented to the delighted eye. The frowning battlements, whose walls are of immense thickness, still tower above as one stands in their welcome shadow out of the incessant glare of the sun, watching the stream of life passing to and from the Great Square. Herzegovinian peasants, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Serbians and Montenegrans pass by in their gorgeous finery. Among the gay throng mingles the incessant blue of the Austrian officers, as a reminder of the power that rules; while Napoleon's "Fort Imperial," some 1200 feet above, looks

[1] *Dalmatia: The Land where East meets West.*

down from its lofty eminence upon the summit of the stony San Sergio.

Pass through the happy crowd, where the ear is charmed now by the smoothest Italian and again by the guttural Slavonic ; then to the Rector's palace, under a massive gateway, and you are upon the quay of the old harbour of Ragusa ; the sky and water vie with each other in intense blueness, the long brown coast, fringed with white surf, dwindles away into the haze that enshrouds Montenegro. Before one, seeming to float upon the blue waters, lies the Illyric island of Lacroma, the half-mythical landing-place of Cœur de Lion, the last home of Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, before his tragic journey.

A petrol launch quickly conveys the traveller over the dancing waves, and ten minutes after leaving the old harbour one is being assisted to land upon Lacroma by a lay brother of the Franciscan monastery founded by Richard of England. Few hot-houses can show such a variety of rare and tropical plants as this sea-girt island. Beautiful blossoms grow and wither here in the utmost profusion. Yet, amidst the sweet foliage, one is never free from memories of sadness, memories of the unhappy Maximilian and of the last days of his nephew, the late Archduke Rudolf. The lay brother takes us to see a deep, rocky basin, wherein the blue waters find a secret way. How cool and inviting it looks, the water rising and falling in response to the motion of the sea beyond. I never knew till then the true meaning of *Aqua Marina*. Surely the old prospectors who first unearthed that delicate beryl must have named their find after some beloved pool like this near their far-off homes.

Here was the bathing-place of the two Hapsburgs, and it was after their sad deaths that the Emperor Franz Josef bestowed the island upon the present monastery.

It is almost with a feeling of sadness that one wanders beneath the thick foliage, through which even the piercing

rays of the sun are unable to penetrate. Gratefully we strolled under the green boughs. Within a few feet the waves dash against the jagged rocks with low murmurings, as though to remind the listeners that they are only resting, and want but a few hours to lash themselves against the rocks with the same savage force that threw England's king upon their mercy. Sitting upon the ground, among the endless maze of rare plants that bloom here with such profusion, we talked with the lay brother and listened to his many old-world tales and memories that he never wearied of recalling. A bell tolled musically from the monastery. The sun, now a red ball of fire, touched the horizon far out in the Adriatic, and with that feeling of complete happiness and rest that comes so seldom in this busy world, we sat and watched the beautiful sunset. It was not until the red orb had almost disappeared that we roused ourselves and returned to the landing-stage across the island, passing through the old monastery on our way.

The launch was waiting, and we embarked. The island lay silhouetted against the glaring sky, and we told the boy in charge to steam round the island. At one spot the rocks rise sheer up from the water's edge, a great height, and here is a massive cavern, not unlike that of Staffa, upon the west coast of Scotland. There is a deadly silence, broken only by the incessant wash of the waves, for this is the spot where those criminals condemned to death by the republic of Ragusa were hurled into eternity. Near the cavern one can hear the waves, like explosions. Our boy calmly steamed right into the entrance upon the top of a wave, and, as I caught sight of Ken's arm stealing towards the clutch lever, he reversed his engine and we backed out again—to my great relief.

Once from under the lee of the island we encountered a fairly heavy sea, heavy, that is, for the size of the launch.

She was in execrable condition, and was run by a single-cylinder oil engine that threatened every moment to thump itself off its bearings. There was a crew of three —two boys and an engineer about thirty years of age. Whether from carelessness or sheer cussedness, as the Americans say, the boy at the wheel let her head fall off, and the next moment we were broadside on. The old tub gave a roll that shipped a large green wave and pretty nearly soaked us to the skin. In less time than it takes to write the boy was sitting upon the floor-boards wondering what earthquake had struck him, and Ken holding the spokes of the wheel in a manner that left no doubt as to his intention of retaining that position until we were in smoother water.

It has been written elsewhere what a keen yachtsman Ken is, as the line of burgees to the credit of his flag testifies. It was amusing to watch the expression on the faces of the crew as they realised the new régime, and then ended by shrugging their shoulders, though they continued to watch Ken's every movement in the anticipation of a clumsy move. We passed the island in fine style, the crazy boat putting its nose into every wave. The wind was freshening each moment and the sea rising quickly ; the waves increased in size till we seemed to be on a continual switchback, and could only just make way against them. It was only Ken's beautiful manœuvring that saved the situation and rescued us from an unpleasant predicament. We were abreast of Ragusa and quite a considerable way out before Ken could get a chance to turn. Picking a good opportunity, he put the wheel over, and with her wretched oil engine thumping like a mad thing, the old tub swung round, just missing by a fraction a snow-capped wave that would easily have sent us to the bottom had it caught us broadside on.

We were now running before the wind. Wave after wave lifted our stern high in the air and passed safely

beneath us, and we rounded the breakwater at last. As we entered smooth water beneath the massive battlements Ken resigned his command, and the Italian boy with a very respectful manner brought us alongside the quay. So ended our visit to the " Lion Heart's " island.

Mrs. Holback calls Ragusa " A Dream City by the Sea," and perhaps this best describes its glories. It is a dream city, set down by the sea—a city of wondrous memories, resplendent with emblems of the past and, above all, by its centuries of honour. One could spend weeks wandering through its flagged streets or upon its massive walls, and when tired of sight-seeing there is a beautiful little bay along the coast, where the rocks, contrary to custom, slope gently into the sea, and where one can enjoy perhaps the most ideal bathe imaginable. The water is of the deepest blue, and a gentle swell rocks one sleepily ; above, the sky is a cloudless expanse, and the air so clear that the whole coast-line is visible far in the distance. Upon the shore the quaintly dressed folk pass in an interminable panorama and the silence is broken by strange tongues. Little wonder Harry de Windt repeats what an English lady once advised him: "Don't write about Ragusa," she said, " or tourists will flock here in crowds and spoil it." She is right. Even now these fairy lands are being " discovered," and Americans and English are beginning to find out their unspoilt wonders. All too soon they will be invaded, and their purely Eastern beauties will be corrupted by our cheap civilisation. But to-day they offer a source of constant pleasure and delight to the initiated few who dearly love the enchanting freshness of their myriad beauties.

CHAPTER XI

ACROSS THE BOCCHE

PREPARATION FOR OUR JOURNEY TO MONTENEGRO—WE OBTAIN USE OF NAVAL PONTOON—START—EPIDAURUS—RAGUSA VECCHIA—PLATEAU OF VINES—TROUBLE WITH MULES—MORE TROUBLE—FREE AT LAST—SIGHTING THE BOCCHE—CASTELNUOVO—THE CATERNE—MERCÉDÈS AFLOAT—CATTARO—FIRST VIEW OF THE GREAT ROAD—ENTRY INTO CATTARO.

ENCHANTING as Ragusa undoubtedly is, there is yet a more enchanting spot that beckons us, a little land o'ershadowed by giant enemies and enshrouded in mystery, the land of the Black Mountain. When Sheila and I were in Ragusa last year we had made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to reach Montenegro with Mercédès. The road is quite good as far as the Bocche di Cattaro, a wondrous fjord, but though Austria has many men at work she has not yet completed a path round the great bays. However, at the narrowest part of the Bocche, a spot where two great arms join a greater third, there is a ferry, and from the opposite bank a narrow but possible road leads to Cattaro. Cattaro, as all the world knows, lies at the gate of Montenegro, towering four thousand feet above the town—silent, majestic, and imposing. Last year we had journeyed as far as the Caterne, but found to our dismay that there was no ferry, and after vainly trying to obtain a boat to hold Mercédès, had been compelled

to abandon her, and to take a boat ourselves as far as Cattaro, visiting Cetinje by carriage. There we learned that though several small cars had progressed thus far, no strange auto had ever penetrated into the interior, and it was then that Sheila and I registered a solemn oath that one day we would return and explore the enchanting little kingdom road by road, and open up the country to future generations of tourists.

We had a friend in Ragusa, Count Caboga, who had been absent upon our previous journey, but who was now in the city. I had written to him from Sarájevo a fortnight before, saying that we were going to make a second attempt to get Mercédès to Montenegro, and knowing him to have influence in Austrian naval circles, asked if he could obtain for us a military pontoon to carry Mercédès safely across the Bocche. He had wired back that he would do all in his power, and upon arriving at Ragusa waited upon us next morning to say that he had been able to obtain the desired pontoon. Montenegro was ours ; the way at last lay open ; and we prepared for a journey that was to prove the very cream and acme of the whole tour.

Comte Caboga is Ragusan to the core ; his ancestors have lived by the old walls for centuries. If you peruse the annals of Ragusan history you will find the name Caboga blazoned in golden letters. The life of Marino Caboga is perhaps the most romantic in history. His bravery during the terrible earthquake of 1667, his brilliant diplomacy and acute sufferings at Constantinople, his release, and finally an honoured life spent in the welfare of the state, read like a romance.

In 1805 Ragusa seemed faced with destruction ; an army of Russians upon one hand and Napoleon upon the other demanded possession of the city. True, they both promised to respect her neutrality, but Ragusa knew well how ruthless they would be once she was in their

possession. Long and serious were the debates of the Senate, and we find Count Giovanni Caboga propounding a proposition worthy of his race.

" Dear as this land is to me," he spoke, " consecrated as it is to our affections by its venerable institutions, its wise laws and the memory of illustrious ancestors, it will henceforth cease to deserve the name of *patria* if its independence be subverted. We have a sufficient number of vessels ; let us, then, emigrate with our families, our fortunes and the public wealth, and preserve our laws rather than expose Ragusa to armed violence. The great Sultan has always treated us kindly ; let us request him to grant us some island of the Archipelago where we may find a new Epidaurus. For an extreme evil I see nothing but an extreme remedy."

Happy for Ragusa and her brave children had she listened to the advice of Caboga, but the change was too great, the wrench too painful, and under the spell of Napoleon Ragusa opened her gates to the French. I have already related how fatal was this move ; Russia attacked the city, aided by a large army of fierce Montenegrans. Wantonly they destroyed everything without the city : palaces, gardens, granaries, mills, important factories that made for the commercial wealth of Ragusa, were barbarously trampled under foot, the rich vineyards and pastures turned into a stricken desert.

Comte Caboga has a beautiful house at Ombla, where he possesses, among other treasures, the identical pillars and capitals of that part of the Rector's palace which fell during the great earthquake. He has also a house just opposite to the Rector's palace to-day. " You ask me what I am," he would say in his genial manner ; " I am not Austrian or German, neither Hungarian nor Dalmatian, I am Ragusan." With such a wondrous history and honourable memories to look back upon, no wonder the Comte and his companions are more than

proud to own as their home, their country and their allegiance, Ragusa, the brave, noble and chivalrous Ragusa of the days of the old republic, the Ragusa of to-day.

We decided to leave our surplus luggage at the "Imperial," and travelling as light as possible, though taking every spare part upon the car, for we knew not what we should have to face. I laid in a good stock of provisions, tinned meats, jams, boiled ham, even bread, and plenty of butter; these last, when sealed in air-proof tins, will keep for ten days. Mineral water we reckoned among the luxuries. Benzine is now quite plentiful, though last year we had to get it ourselves by boat from Fiume. Tyres we had in abundance, so that we were as fit to face the unknown as foresight and experience could make us.

How exquisite was the morning upon which we left Ragusa; sky and sea vied with each other in depth of colour, the clear air, fragrant with the scent of countless flowers, was yet fresh with the coolness of the night. The pontoon had been ordered for two o'clock, and we had plenty of time.

Passing beneath the massive fortification, we commenced to ascend by the road by which we had descended from the wild Karst region. About five hundred feet above the blue waters we come to two roads, our old one climbing into the limestone plateau two thousand feet above, the other descending to the water's edge and following the coast. Skimming through the rich vegetation, we enjoy many exquisite glimpses of the sea, and presently come to the peninsula upon which stands Ragusa Vecchia, upon the spot where once flourished the Grecian city of Epidaurus.

Days one could spend wandering among these ruins; truly it is a "land of promise," this Adriatic coast. Conceive the Riviera enriched a hundred-fold, and you

have the Cornich road of Dalmatia. The jagged grey hills upon our left, through whose clutches we had passed, were ever a safe retreat to those inveterate foes of the civilised sea towns, the savage Morlacci ; down upon some defenceless house or village they would sweep, sure of a safe refuge among the towering Karst. There were even worse foes than the Morlacci that the sea-towns had to contend against, the lawless fleets of corsairs who ravaged the seas during the Middle Ages, wrecking, destroying and spoiling where they would, and only answerable to a stronger force than themselves.

For some fifteen miles the road crossed this large promontory ; rising, it traverses a broad, flat plain, richly cultivated and covered with acres of vines that extend as far as the mountain base. We could not have struck a more unfortunate moment for passing ; it was the time for the gathering of the grapes, and the road was covered inches deep with dry yellow dust, and thick with mules and peasants. The proverbial bull in a china shop was as play, as water unto wine, compared with the disturbance that Mercédès created.

It must have taken us an hour and a half to cross that eight miles of country. Time after time we stopped the engine, even descending and standing in front of the radiator. But all to no purpose. The mules absolutely refused to pass. Loaded heavily as they were with huge panniers filled to overflowing with luscious red grapes, they reared and danced like wild mustangs from the Western plains. Pass they would not ; some leaped over hedges and walls, playing havoc with the vines, and one mule actually jumped right over the bonnet, vanishing among the green leaves. Alas! we had left the wild country where the tillers of the soil, although carrying a veritable armoury of weapons in their belts and looking like brigands, were nevertheless nature's gentlemen, rough diamonds.

Italian blood was a good deal thicker than Slavonic in the present instance, and the result appeared to be a very complete combination of the worst passions of both races, unrelieved by any of their many virtues. Both Ken and I received a lesson that day in all-round, fluent swearing; I had imagined myself versed in the art after listening to the boatmen of Naples, the cabmen of Rome and the Gondoliers of Venice, but for downright unutterable blackguardism I have never heard the like; the contrast between the dignified Moslems of Bosnia, or the no less courteous *rayahs*, and these coast scorpions showed how unfit were the latter to live in a land so fair and fruitful as this. Sheila and Dorothy spoke Italian prettily, but I am happy to say it was quite impossible for them to follow the torrent of abuse that flowed so unceasingly.

One party we met, consisting of half a dozen men, some women and five mules, caused a special commotion of their own, that shone out even from among the other commotions with star-like brilliancy, and which I must recount. It so happened that we were stopped at the time, and Ken, Rodgers and I were standing by the bonnet; a narrow lane led into a field some twenty yards ahead of us, and Ken and I endeavoured to persuade the men to lead their animals up the lane until we had passed; but in vain. They refused to leave the road even for a second, and with scowling faces came on, ignoring us entirely. Had their animals been in a similarly haughty and disdainful mood, all would have been well, but directly the foremost mule, a huge, raw-boned specimen, caught sight of us, it reared upon its hind legs, and twisting round, bolted into the four others following. The result was appalling, a mixed heap of terrified mules and shouting men struggling in the middle of the road. The panniers of one of the mules had slipped round to one side, completely overbalancing

the wretched animal, and literally anchoring it to the ground. I have travelled in Sicily and South Italy, but the language during the next ten minutes was a revelation.

Two of the mules at last regained their feet and bolted down the road, cannoning into party after party, until as far as the eye could see there extended a long line of dancing figures.

The last mule, the one that had caused all the trouble, scrambled to its feet, appearing quite dazed. A villainous-looking man roughly seized the bridle, and with his unshaven face lit up with diabolic passion, tugged at the poor animal; the mule, recovering itself, began to get restive, and instead of trying to quiet it, the man turned his uncontrollable wrath upon the dumb beast and kicked it violently in the stomach with his heavy boot. A cry from Sheila and Dorothy was not needed, as Ken, Rodgers and I sprang forward with a simultaneous movement towards the inhuman wretch; but retribution had already overtaken him. The mule, terrified by pain, bounded forward, hurling the man some ten or fifteen feet away, afterwards galloping after its companions. It would take too long to describe in detail how we pacified the tumult. Three resolute men can do much among such scum as we had to face. The animals were caught by some peasants along the road and brought back. A few silver pieces restored good humour, though we refrained from giving the vicious man anything, and were glad to escape so easily from what might have proved a very trying situation.

I must relate one little incident—a ray of sunshine amidst the darkness. Another band of peasants, three men and four women, leading four heavily laden mules, met us just at the end of the valley of vines. Of course we stopped Mercédès and descended, ready for any emergency. Grown wise in our generation, we insisted upon the animals being led off the road, and helped

in the simple task. Mercédès was started, and passed, causing little trouble, and as we were mounting to our places the head-man sent one of the women, a bright-faced maid with an abundance of jet-black hair falling in profusion from beneath a snow-white kerchief, with a great armful of beautiful red grapes as a present. We had positively to insist before she would accept a small *douceur* in return. The last we saw of our friends, they were looking back with laughing faces and waving their hands in farewell. It is pleasant to recall this incident; truly there are good and bad among every creed and nation.

Leaving the plateau of vines, the road ascends to cross a razor-like ridge of high rocks, the backbone of the promontory. As it climbs the scenery changes. There is a change also in the condition of the road; it is covered with loose stones, and in places has a severe gradient. The summit is quickly reached, and the next moment we are descending a precipitous valley by a series of extremely steep hair-pin turns. A tiny stone fort, almost hidden by the rocks, again reminds one of the iron hand within the velvet glove of Austria.

Quickly we drop downwards, and soon reach one of the wonders of the world, the renowned Bocche di Cattaro. The Bocche di Cattaro has often been likened to a Norwegian fjord, and not the least of its wonders is the very fact of its existence in this spot. The shape of the Bocche resembles that of a giant three-legged starfish; the leg which communicates with the sea takes a sharp turn, so that the whole Bocche is practically land-locked. The bay, called the Golfo di Cattaro, is particularly magnificent, not unlike the lake of Uri or the north end of Lake Como, only wilder and more savage—for the land of the Black Mountain towers high into the heavens and gazes down with lofty disdain upon the peaceful waters. Castelnuovo lies in the Baja di Teodo, or first

leg, and is a naval base of importance. We are now nearly at the extremity of this varied empire ; Austria's position has been growing narrower and narrower, culminating in a long taper reaching past Cattaro in the innermost bay.

A few miles of the Golfo di Teodo and we reach the old walls of Castelnuovo, its fortifications and turrets torn and bruised by many a century of sword and ravage. Black Turkish forts, barely distinguishable from the rocks they stand upon, jut out into the sparkling water, telling strange tales of fierce wars and sieges to their peaceful surroundings—beautiful woodlands, rich in a multitude of tropical plants and trees, that form a fitting foreground to the wild range of slate-blue mountains behind. Like her sisters, Castelnuovo possesses a long history of war and pillage : built during the great days of the thirteenth century by Tvrtko I, King of Bosnia, it fell a century later into the hands of the Moslem. The Turks held it for fifty years, when it was wrested from them by the Venetians and Spaniards, who strengthened its fortifications, only to lose possession of it the following year, when, after a desperate resistance, the governor surrendered to Barbarossa, who, disregarding his promises, cruelly put them to death, as was the custom generally practised by the Turks.

It was too important a position, however, to leave in Moslem hands, and Venice recaptured and held it until her own fall.

Like the remainder of the Bocche, it suffered in the earthquake of 1667, but was repaired by the Venetians. Russia, aided by Montenegro, held possession of the castle in 1806, when it was ceded to the French, only to be taken for England by Admiral Hoste, being finally handed over to Austria in 1814.

On through the old town, now a noisy fishing village with a quaint old harbour, we continue our way, passing

close to the beautiful old monastery of Savana, one of the finest in all Dalmatia, and about ten minutes later reach the Caterne.

The large Golfo di Teodo is joined to the other legs of the Bocche by a narrow stretch of water, where the towering mountains cast their shadow one upon the other ; this is known as the " Canale delle Caterne " or the " Channel of the Chain," for during the Middle Ages, when the Bocche was involved in continuous warfare, a heavy chain was stretched from shore to shore to prevent the pirate ships passing into the upper reaches.

The Bocchesi, the people who live upon the edge of the blue waters, have ever been a race to themselves. They were principally of the Greek Church, though of latter years Italian blood has mixed more freely with Bocchesi. They always enjoyed the reputation of being a brave and thrifty folk, gaining their principal living from foreign commerce, and were early the wealthiest people in Dalmatia. During the Middle Ages they suffered frequent attacks from the Corsair and other pirates, and were continually exposed to the savage inroads of the fierce Montenegrans.

They, moreover, fought valiantly against the Turks, and proved that they were not degenerated, for in 1814, as allies of the French, they attacked our fleet under Admiral Hoste, proving themselves both brave and skilful.

It was only one o'clock, and we had an hour to wait. The military pontoon was not in sight, so we had our lunch beneath a beautiful old tree by the lapping water. Cattaro lies at the head of the Golfo di Cattaro, which is hidden from us, but we enjoyed a wonderful vista of the land we had tried so hard to reach. The whole end of the Bocche, that is, the two smaller arms of the fjord, washes the base of a great range of mountains. Parched and arid they look to the eye, unbroken, unrelieved, and beyond them is the land of freedom, upon whose neck

the yoke of a conqueror has never rested, peopled by a race of warriors, Montenegro the free. Once upon the summits of those mighty hills, we shall be gazing at the mountains of Albania, most unruly of the Sultan's domains, savage and untamed. How clearly I remember the day, just a year ago, when Mercédès stood upon this selfsame spot, when Sheila and I gazed hopelessly at the grey-blue range, and how our hearts sank as we looked wistfully across at the opposite shore, so near and yet utterly beyond reach.

The advent of the automobile had not been considered ; a ferry was conspicuous by its absence. Should the foot traveller desire to cross, he may hire a rowing or sailing boat from some fisherman. Could anything have been more tantalising than our predicament ? There were we, upon the very threshold of the land of the Black Mountain, positively within grasp of our goal, and the prospect of a final triumph to our journey was dashed to fragments before our despairing eyes. A few sailormen loafing about the shore collected, and upon learning of our trouble proceeded to show us their boats. One intrepid person, with more inventive genius than brains, proposed tying two rowing boats side by side and standing Mercédès upon planks placed across : Mercédès scales just over three tons, but this fact he put upon one side as immaterial, and in a zealous attempt to convince us how safe and easy it would be, he stepped upon the gunwale of his boat, and as it leant over quickly, nearly fell into the Bocche, and more nearly still capsized the boat. Another man offered his sailing barque, which might have done had Mercédès been dropped aboard by a derrick, right amidships ; otherwise it would be quite impossible to get her aboard by the totally inadequate and primitive appliances at our disposal. The sailors did not lack ideas, in fact, they were rather too full of startling proposals, lacking only common sense. Long

"SHE WAS ABOARD AT LAST."
CROSSING THE BOCCHE DI CATTARO EN ROUTE FOR MONTENEGRO

and loud we argued, searching in vain for a better boat, but all to no avail.

How well I remember our feelings when we reluctantly decided to abandon the idea. One day, I vowed, as we turned Mercédès, we will get her across, and I shook my fist at the blue stretch of water, beyond which the jagged grey mountains seemed to mock us.

It was good to think of those days with the feeling of success we now had; yet both Sheila and myself were half expecting that the pontoon would be sunk, or something dreadful happen to it before fate would give us our hearts' desire. A joyful shout from Rodgers upon the tiny quay startled us, and jumping up, we ran helter-skelter to see if he was not really the victim of a mirage.

Teodo, the naval base, lies towards the sea, and between it and where we stood, across the wide bay, we made out a broad, black speck. I sent Rodgers for my Zeiss, and by their aid the black speck resolved itself into a large pontoon, drawn by a smart naval tug. Presently we could make out its shape with the naked eye, and see the white-dressed figures of the sailors, and at five minutes to two it was alongside the quay.

The pontoon proved to be a heavy flat-decked hulk, large enough to carry three Mercédès if necessary. Unfortunately two hatches divided the deck; their sides were about a foot in height, and, worst of all, the hatches were too close together to allow of Mercédès standing between them, while neither was wide enough to take both wheels.

This necessitated building planks up one side the required height, thus having Mercédès balanced twelve inches above the deck, with her wheels literally hanging over each end. I will not weary the reader with details of how we finally got her aboard, though when she was just being moved on, and her two front wheels were upon the level of the hatch, a passing steamer, the one from

Ragusa, sent us her waves, and all of a sudden, to my astonishment, for I was steering, I saw the bonnet rising and falling nearly eighteen inches. You must understand that Mercédès was balanced upon two planks, the off-wheels touching the edge. Ken cried out in warning, and with the help of the sailors managed to shove Mercédès back into safety upon solid ground. The heat was nearly 100° in the shade, and the sun blazed down upon our heads; though we had our coats and waistcoats off, we were soaked in perspiration, and the matter of the waves did not tend to cool us. "She" was aboard at last and we had secured her with ropes; a moment later and the steam tug gave a shrill whistle, the quay slid away, and the first step towards Montenegro had been successfully taken. It was delightful under the awning of the tug, which, by the way, was fastened alongside, and our speed, though slow, caused a cooling breeze. We did not make at once for the opposite shore, as I had supposed, but steamed through the narrows and down the right-hand shore, making for a spot some half-hour's sail from the Caterne. Here we unloaded, and after arranging for the pontoon to meet us at noon one week from that day, Rodgers started the engine, and the second step, like the first, had been successfully taken.

The road now follows the water's edge, passing up the Golfo di Cattaro. Often we came upon small villages, where the houses were so close together that it was a question of inches only. Once we really thought that fate had repented of her generosity, for we found the road hemmed in by two white-walled houses; I do not exaggerate when I say that between the front mud-guards and the walls one could not have got a finger. The majority of the buildings are barracks, and the whole place swarms with soldiers. We had now reached the end of the bay, and were gazing upon Cattaro, behind which the land of the Black Mountain towers four thousand

feet straight in our faces. As we strain our eyes up at its precipice side we can actually trace a faint white line, looking for all the world like a piece of cotton thrown carelessly upon a grey cushion, zigzagging in countless turns, and twisting higher and higher till it makes one dizzy to think that one has to climb that giant staircase. Cattaro in itself is a sight to marvel at; centuries of warfare and earthquakes have left it but few ancient buildings. God and man seem to have joined hands in wrecking the unfortunate town.

Nor is Cattaro an ordinarily built place; it seems to the unaccustomed eye as if some giant genii had plucked the town from its safe resting-place by the lapping waters and hurled it bodily against the precipitous hill-side, where by a miracle, instead of falling back into the sea, it had clung to the perpendicular mountain. The earthquakes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries wrought great havoc in the town, as did the great plague in 1572. The old buildings erected by Venice in the Middle Ages have been seized by Austria, ever with an appreciative eye to strategic positions, rebuilt and fortified almost beyond recognition.

Clinging to the overhanging rocks, the first view of Cattaro gives one the uncomfortable impression that the Black Mountain is only waiting for one of the numerous tempests to give it the necessary excuse for dropping a few thousand tons of rock upon the daring little community beneath. Nor is this idea so very far wrong, as history shows. Cattaro first came into importance in the eleventh century, and soon became a republic, under the protection of the kings of Serbia. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the republic of Cattaro petitioned King Ludwick of Hungary for aid against the Venetians, but in spite of this soon yielded to the sway of the supreme republic. Hungary now came to their aid and wrested it back, but as it lay too distant from the Crown lands

it was given to the great Tvrtko, the founder of Castelnuovo. Owing to their fear of the growing power of Ragusa, with whom they were at war, the inhabitants of Cattaro welcomed the rule of the Winged Lion, and after intervals of Moslem attack they finally became part of the possessions of Venice; when Venice fell the prosperity of the Bocche ended. Austria annexed Cattaro and the surrounding lands in 1797. France under Napoleon, preaching the new doctrines of liberty, equality and fraternity, seized it in 1806, but the Montenegrans, egged on by Russia and roused to fury, poured down their precipitous frontier line into Cattaro, forcing the French commandant to yield. France, however, regained the town and held it until 1813, when Admiral Hoste, with a few British men-of-war, brilliantly forced its surrender and handed it over to the Prince of Montenegro. Four months later Montenegro handed it back to Austria for a considerable indemnity, and save for one or two minor risings there has since been peace in the land.

Presently we join the great road that leads down from the mountains, and is thick with traffic, passing *en route* for Cetinje, the capital of Montenegro. Many were the stalwart figures of the mountaineers that we met or passed, swinging along with tireless step and manly stride. Tall, good-looking and healthy, they were fine specimens of manhood, their faces tanned to a deep brown, their hands instinctively playing along their brilliant sashes and feeling for the hard butt of an absent revolver.

From childhood the Montenegran never parts with his gun; he would as soon think of going naked as of leaving off his revolver, which is stuck in his scarf in as conspicuous and accessible a manner as possible. However, as I explained before, the Austrian authorities make it compulsory for the Montenegran to deposit his arms at the frontier before entering Austrian territory. A wise and beneficial measure when one realises how narrow

is this strip of land they hold, and which here stretches between the deep sea and the—Montenegran.

We were now entering the town. Mule waggons and pack mules blocked the narrow streets, and we found it advisable to leave Mercédès in a stone-flagged square and make our way on foot to the post office.

After reading our correspondence we strolled towards the harbour. Passing through an ancient gateway, guarded by soldiers, we find ourselves in the midst of a busy fruit market, which is held upon the edge of the quay. The water is intensely blue, vying with the deep tone of the rich sky; across the bay rises the steep, rocky isthmus we had crossed, some one thousand five hundred feet, deeply wooded with the greenest of trees and crowned by two wicked-looking forts. Here Austria holds her own by sheer watchfulness and readiness for all emergencies, and, as in the Herzegovina, every summit, hill and mountain is capped by massive fortifications, usually enwrapped by fence after fence of barbed wire. As the sun is often reflected by the steel of the sentries' bayonets, one almost fancies it to be heliographic signalling. The camera is, of course, debarred with even more severity here than anywhere else. Should a person be detected even carrying one, or having any connection, no matter how remote, with the unlucky instrument, he would straightway be consigned to oblivion until such time as he could prove the harmlessness of his intentions. It were better by far (except for personal reasons) to be associated with a nitro-glycerine bomb than with a harmless kodak, for the former would do less damage, according to the military governor (metaphorically speaking, of course), than the developed negatives would do in the possession of a certain foreign power.

Turning our attention to the market, we spent a cheerful half-hour wandering among the folk. The streets

are thronged with soldiers. Mercédès we found enveloped by militarism ; quite three deep the " Tommies " crowded round her. Upon our appearance they quickly made room for us, a simple act of courtesy much appreciated after the difficulty in forcing a way through many a less polite crowd.

A few gentle toots upon the horn and an opening appears in the sea of faces, and we are outside the walls, heading for the land of the Black Mountain.

H.M. KING NIKOLAS OF MONTENEGRO
(Photo by I. T. Langhans, Marienbad-Prague)

PART II

MONTENEGRO

"The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet."—BYRON.

CHAPTER XII

"JUS GLADII"

CLIMBING THE GIANT STAIRCASE—BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE BOCCHE—INTO THE CRNAGORA—HISTORY OF THE LAND—NJEGUŠI—A SEA OF ROCKS—DESOLATION PERSONIFIED—THE ALBANIAN ALPS AND LAKE OF SKUTARI—CETINJE—MONTENEGRO TO-DAY—RUSSIAN INFLUENCE—KING NIKOLAS—HIS GENIUS AND FIRM CHARACTER—THE KING—THE MAN—THE "FATHER"—MONTENEGRAN CHARACTER—TREATMENT OF WOMEN—THE COMING OF CIVILISATION.

THE chief respect in which the wonderful road to Cetinje differs from similar great climbs in the Alps is the fact that there is no valley to break a way through the giant range of mountains which rise up sheer from the water's edge. Over such passes as the Stelvio, Gotthard, Simplon, Splügen and others the road follows for some distance at least a valley or split in the mountains, down which a torrent roars, enabling the road to mount quickly upwards. The road to Cetinje has nothing to aid it in its arduous task; it seems as though Nature herself had set man a problem to tax all his ingenuity. Only when one gazes upwards and notes the height and steepness of the frowning rocks which, four thousand two hundred feet above one's head, cut off the blue vault of heaven, can one conceive dimly the stupendous task that had to be faced.

We had some difficulty with the mule waggons which were crowded at the entrance to Cattaro, but once safely past we commenced to make up for lost time. Soon we reached the junction of the roads and, sweeping to the left, began the climb proper. We are no novices in Alpine ascents (*en auto*), but for magnificent conceptions and perfect construction perhaps the Splügen Pass can alone attempt to hold its own with this one. By the aid of giant zigzags the road passes backwards and forwards, covering the same ground time after time, but always considerably higher. As we ascend the view expands beneath us; first of all we reach the summit of the walls and fortifications of Cattaro and get a clear view of the whole leg of the Bocche. Higher and higher we climb, till presently the rocky promontory which rises opposite Cattaro some one thousand five hundred feet in height, is more than topped and the whole bay of Teodo flashes into view. Summit upon summit, the mountains of the Herzegovina stretch far away into the distance, and, looking at the great billows of barren ranges, we marvel how we could have found a way through their midst.

Upon each summit we spy an ugly modern fort, cold and silent. Look where you will your eyes cannot rest upon a commanding position uncrowned by fortifications. How little we in England know of the anxiety entailed by a land frontier; only those who have been so stationed in our great possessions can realise the constant watchfulness to guard against all emergencies and surprises. Upon the Franco-Prussian frontier, for instance, one can seldom take a stroll without being dogged by a uniform; but here in Austria's far dependency a different and yet no less vigilance reigns. Save in the towns, soldiers are rarely visible; naught but the bare, bleak forts remind one of the watchful eye within. There is something ominous in the feeling of being watched by these unseen eyes, of knowing that probably half a dozen telescopes

PART OF THE GIANT STAIRCASE THAT CLIMBS INTO THE FASTNESSES OF THE BLACK MOUNTAIN

are following one backwards and forwards upon the mountain's side, and that one's every movement is being discussed.

All this time we had been ascending rapidly ; wonderment gave place to excitement as we neared the Montenegran frontier. The bay of Cattaro has contracted until it resembles a narrow finger and Cattaro a toy town ; the whole Bocche is now visible, taking its marvellous star-fish shape so peculiar to the eye, and beyond gleams the blue expanse of the vivid Adriatic. We felt favoured among mortals; Sheila was silent in her appreciation, now and then laying a gauntleted hand upon my arm to draw my attention to some new beauty.

" It's just like a balloon ascent," came Dorothy's voice from the tonneau, " the earth is positively dropping away beneath us."

This was true ; from our seats we could look down to the nearest ground, three thousand feet directly below. The gradient of the road is moderate and offered no difficulty to Mercédès. Upon her " second " she greedily devoured the road, taking the ascent as though propelled by a giant's hand. The wind-screen is up and the warm air blows strongly in our faces.

It was one of those drives which makes one glad to be alive to enjoy such sensations. It is hard, nay, almost impossible, to bring to a mind unfamiliar with such experiences, a sense of the magnificent exhilaration, the overwhelming feeling of joyous freedom, that one experiences ; even the ground we were traversing added the fascinating touch of romance. We are upon the actual frontier of Dalmatia and Montenegro, the road itself the one and only link with modern civilisation. A score of miles farther and road traffic ceases ; in a few minutes from now we shall be gazing upon the snow-tipped mountains of Albania and looking down upon the lake of Skutari in Turkey. Near its summit the road reaches

a place where its further ascent is literally "upon its hands and knees," as Ken called it. For some twenty zigzags the road laps back upon itself, the zigs abnormally short, lap upon lap, the corners not varying a foot.

From the topmost hair-pin it would be quite possible to throw a pebble down upon the first turn, some eight hundred feet beneath. At this point our enthusiasm overcame our prudence, and at any cost we determined to get a snapshot, despite the circle of grim forts. It was Sheila who undertook the heinous deed. Preparing her kodak she gave the word and I stopped Mercédès; instantly she was out, had snapped the view, and was in her seat by the time I had slipped into the "first," and with hardly a perceptible stop the deed was done; we were crawling up the slope, gradually getting into our stride lest the sudden rush might look suspicious, and devoutly hoping that our misdeeds had passed unnoticed.

Near the summit we crossed the Montenegran frontier; only a notice-post records the fact. There is no need for frontier guards. The custom-house is at Njeguši, the first Montenegran village, and thither one must go; for the alternative is starvation upon the Black Mountain. At the summit of the zigzags the road is level for some distance, being cut out of the mountain side and skirting the three-thousand-feet precipice that drops from our feet straight down to Cattaro. About half a mile or so and we come to a narrow gut that passes between two low hills and the star-shaped Bocche, the expanse of the Adriatic and the ranges of the Karst are all lost until our return. Turning our backs upon the idyllic scene, we are in a few seconds transferred to a totally different world. The view that opens before us is so abnormally arid that its very hideousness was abated; grey is the predominating colour—grey rocks, grey hills. It is a typical Montenegran landscape. To quote Mr. Stillman's words—"a poor, rocky waste of limestone, which

nothing but the spirit of domination should provoke anyone to invade. In no other land have I seen so little earth for so much rock." The huts of the people are of the poorest description, built of the same grey rock, beside some hollow in the rocks which, by dint of much labour, has been filled with earth wrested patiently from the stricken hill-side.

To study carefully the whole history of the land from the days of the Great Dushan down to the Treaty of Berlin thirty-two years ago is more like reading a rather exaggerated romance than actual history. It seems incredible that a race so small in numbers, so inferior in sinews of war, should have been able to withstand even for half a century the almost overwhelming resources of a foe that had all but conquered Europe and, moreover, was at the zenith of its power ; but that they should have withstood that mighty foe for nearly five centuries is nigh beyond belief.

The Crnagora (Black Mountain) in those days was to all intents and purposes only Cetinje and Njeguši, with the stricken Karst that extends between the Bocche and the lake of Skutari, a veritable fortress of nature, a tiny kingdom of rock.

Even Venice and, lately, Austria aided the Turk and prevented supplies from entering Montenegro, refusing to allow those vital necessities—powder and bullets—to pass the frontier. When Montenegro was forced to seek upon the bodies of her foes the means of prolonging the struggle her determination never wavered. Offers of peace from the Moslem, coupled with tempting bribes, if Montenegro would but own herself a province of Turkey, were met with savage refusals, and again and yet again did the Turk hurl his armies against the land—great waves of Moslemism that dashed themselves to pieces against the Black Mountain.

Attacked from three quarters at once, threatened by

European powers, their capital in the hands of the Turk, their churches and homes desecrated, the tiny plains to which they looked for very sustenance laid waste, their hearts still beat true, and gathering themselves together, they hurled back the foe. Every Briton's heart must warm to this little land if he but reads its history, and he cannot help but admire a nation who, ignoring odds, be they what they might, fought from first to last for freedom, freedom for their land, their homes and their children's children.

From time immemorial the Montenegran has been a warrior, born and bred in an atmosphere of continual warfare; to-day their descendants are fearless fighters of gigantic stature. In the sketch I gave of the history of the Balkans, I told how in the second century the Roman legions landed in Dalmatia, driving Queen Teuta, who had murdered their *embassage*, through what is Montenegro to-day and forcing her to pay an annual tribute. From that time onward Roman influence was permanent. The Emperor Diocletian, who abdicated at Nicomedia, was a native of these lands. When the Western Empire fell in 476 Diocletia, as this land was named, became part of the Eastern Empire. For six hundred years the land was ruled by one powerful family after another, then for a hundred years it was swayed by the Byzantine Greeks. Zeta, as we may call this land, was one of the states of the famous Serb confederation, and it was from this little principality that Stefan Dušhan became Tzar of the Serb people. It has been told before what great dreams Dušhan had of forming one huge Serb kingdom, with Constantinople as its capital. Meanwhile the province of Zeta was ruled by the strong family of the Balšić, under whose government the state thrived, and when the hope of Serbia was dashed to the ground upon the bloody field of Kossovo, they held all the land from Ragusa to the Drin, including

Southern Herzegovina. With the fall of Kossovo it was each state for itself, and from 1389 until the present day Zeta, or Montenegro as we can now call it, was left to fight its way alone, being the only Balkan state that, while defying the Turk, while even rejecting every offer of alliance with the Moslem, held its position unconquered. After several unfortunate wars with Venice the family of Balšić died out and Zeta fell under the sway of Stefan Crnoiević, the Black Prince, who allied himself to Skenderbeg of Albania. During the next twelve years it is recorded that he fought over fifty battles against the Turks, and defeated successive armies hurled against him; Ivan, his son, during his reign, had to contend with much greater odds; the Turk in his successive conquests captured Constantinople and Hungary, and, as we have seen, conquered Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia and Albania, thus practically surrounding brave little Zeta. Forced to abandon his capital, Ivan withdrew with his people into the mountains of the Katunska, and selected the small, fertile plain for his capital where Cetinje stands to-day.

In that delightful little book, *The Land of the Black Mountain*, written by Reginald Wyon and Gerald Prance, is told how, being hard pressed by the foe, Ivan called his people together, and they there swore that famous oath that their descendants have so faithfully kept.

"So this little band of warriors," reads the account, "and they could not have numbered more than eight thousand fighting men, swore to resist the almighty foe to death—not to attack but to resist. It must have been an impressive scene, this compact between Prince and people, and later history bears out fully how nobly the descendants of these mountain warriors have kept to their oath. For they alone, of all the Balkan States, have successfully repulsed the Turk, who, though often

seemingly victorious, has returned home with shattered armies and full of impotent rage."

Ivan died in peace, his days spent after his victories in sowing the seeds of learning and in drilling his people. One of Montenegro's proudest boasts is that, in a little hut not far from Rjeka, Ivan erected a full-sized printing-press (destroyed by the Turks) barely twenty years after Caxton had instituted his in Westminster. After Ivan's reign the administration was in the hands of a Vladika or Prince Bishop, who was elected by the people. Two hundred years later it was decided to make the princeship hereditary, and Danilo Petrović, Lord of Njeguši, was elected as the first hereditary ruler. During all these years Turkish armies, one after another, were hurled against Montenegro; twice they reached and burnt Cetinje, only to suffer complete annihilation upon their return to the lake of Skutari. It is even recorded that once as many as eighty thousand Moslems fell to the indomitable spirit of these heroes of the Black Mountains.

The year 1767 marks a radical change in the government, for during that year a man appears in the land, Stiepan Mali by name (or Stephen the Little), who gave out that he was the murdered Peter III of Russia; his tale was readily believed, and, strange to say, he was one of the finest princes that Montenegro ever had. When it became known that he was an impostor the country still felt the need of his strong hand, as Danilo Petrović's heir was a mere cipher, and decided to retain Stiepan Mali as their prince. It was soon after his accession that Turkey sought yet again to subdue the little kingdom, while Venice, following her usual custom, harrowed the southern frontier and stopped military supplies. When Montenegro was at its last gasp a great storm burst over the country, completely destroying the Venetian powder magazine, and so terrifying the Turks that they fled precipitously from the neighbourhood

of the Black Mountain. The event is still looked upon in Montenegro as a divine miracle and is celebrated each year upon the anniversary. Alas! Stiepan's end was violent—assassinated by strangulation at the instigation of the Pasha of Skutari. The Petrović dynasty again takes command in the form of St. Peter, famous in Montenegran history.

It was in his time that Montenegro proved to Napoleon that at least there was a people who refused to acknowledge his greatness, and made even his generals and soldiers fear the dwellers of the Crnagora. It was to his successor, Peter II, that the Moslem, tired of his fruitless exertions, offered a gift of territory and a Turkish title if Peter would yield him allegiance. Peter's answer was worthy of the highest traditions of Montenegro. "As long as my people defend me I need no Turkish title to my throne: if they desert me, such a title would avail me little!"

The war that followed ended disastrously for Turkey, and peace reigned in the land. The little country had now a Christian enemy to face, Austria, and, at the instigation of Russia, she poured down her troops upon Cattaro and even as far as the walls of Ragusa. Like England, Montenegro alone was able to defy Napoleon, teaching his generals and men a lesson they never forgot, an act that forced in his anger from the Emperor the words that he would turn Montenegro into a Monte*rosso*—an empty threat that recoiled upon his own head.

It was Peter's successor, Danilo II, uncle of the present King Nikolas, who, feeling his inability to fill both positions of Prince and Bishop, severed the connection and contented himself with the temporal power only. During his reign the Turk invaded the land, and at Grahoro was fought a great battle, when Montenegro, under the command of the famous Mirko, "the Sword of Montenegro" as he was called, and father of Nikolas,

overwhelmingly defeated the Moslem. In 1861 Danilo was assassinated at Cattaro. His nephew Nikolas, son of Mirko, now ascended the throne, and he reigns to-day, respected for his personal courage and beloved by all.

We have seen how, during the insurrection of 1876 in Herzegovina, the King was unable to keep back his war-loving people from crossing the Herzegovinian frontier in aid of their kinsmen in that persecuted land; how when Turkey, exasperated by this unofficial help, gave savage notice that directly she had silenced the rebellion she would settle matters with the tiny kingdom in real earnest. This decided King Nikolas, and so it is said he dispatched one thousand five hundred picked warriors to fight under the indomitable Peko. How they fared I have related elsewhere. The Berlin Treaty of 1878, as well as handing Bosnia and Herzegovina over to Austrian administration, *for the first time in history* gave to Montenegro a clear definition of her frontier, and what was most important of all, recognised her as *a separate state;* thus, after centuries of war and anxiety, Montenegro at last reaped the reward of her labours and bravery. King Nikolas was now enabled to turn his attention to the improvement of his country, sure at last of the safety of his realms from the grasp of the Infidel. But though occupied with civil duties, King Nikolas still insists upon keeping up the full fighting efficiency of his subjects, and they are at the present moment even more ready, if it were possible, to take the field at a moment's notice and to defend their fatherland against the attack of any enemy who might venture to invade their rocky homes. The King is at the same time ruler and father to his people, sharing with them their patriotism, and by his far-seeing policy and financial genius year by year strengthening the position and adding to the safety of the land he has served and loved so well.

Njeguši is a village upon a small, cultivated plain sur-

NJEGUŠI, THE BIRTHPLACE OF KING NIKOLAS, IS SURROUNDED BY THE BARREN KARST. (MONTENEGRO)
(NOTE THE ROAD WINDING ITS PERILOUS WAY TO THE SUMMIT)

rounded by stricken Karst, and is the frontier town of Montenegro. Our passports were examined, but nothing else, and we were free to proceed.

We have yet a climb of some eight hundred feet immediately behind the town. On our way we pass an insignificant white house, in which King Nikolas was born, and which is still owned by the King. We were now really among the people of the Crnagora, and to Ken alone of all our party they were new. Years ago Dorothy and I had sailed among the islands of Adria and visited Cetinje, while Sheila and I had driven over the road only a year ago. Even Ken did not enjoy their brilliant colours and graceful outlines more than we did. One does not see the Montenegran costume to anything like perfection upon this much-travelled way, though one is instantly struck by the splendid appearance of the men. The universal costume consists first of a long shaped coat hung from the shoulders: it has a wide skirt reaching to the knees, which, as the wearer walks, gives him somewhat the swing that the Highlander gains from the kilt; a waistcoat of red, heavily embroidered in gold or black braid, according to the worldly possessions of the owner; a brilliant sash wound round the waist; then a pair of extremely baggy trousers, a beautiful shade of dark blue: these end at the knees in the top of a pair of heavy white felt leggings, fastening up the back of the leg, and hide shoes. The better class wear Russian top-boots of the softest leather, reaching to the knees. One and all wear a little round hat upon the head. The crown is bright red, an emblem of the blood shed upon the grey rocks; the outside band is of black silk, black in memory of fatal Kossovo and the Serbian Dream. Five gold bands are embroidered on the red crown to celebrate the five centuries of freedom; in the centre of the smallest circle are the King's initials, "H I," "HNKOAA . I," the Greek letters for "Nikola I"; and

the last, and perhaps strictest enforced custom of all, that of carrying a loaded revolver conspicuously in the sash. I shall have cause hereafter to speak of this, so will not enlarge upon it now. Among the better classes the coat is of sky-blue, green or dark blue, so that when some hundreds of figures so dressed gather together the scene presented is one of the greatest brilliancy. The army, upon the other hand, have dispensed with the long outer coat, and wear a short red jacket to the sash, giving them a very smart appearance.

There is practically no difference in uniform for the different officers and services, save a gilt metal badge sewn upon the black silk front of the round caps and worn over the forehead. The only difference visible is in the quality of the material used; the King, for example, wears a fine gold waistcoat over the long swinging coat. To obtain a full gala costume costs as much as forty pounds, and this love of finery, with gambling, are two of the great evils of the Montenegran character. The physical standard of the men is very high, indeed, it is not surprising to see a man six feet six inches, and few indeed who do not exceed six feet. The women, upon the other hand, present a very different picture. To begin with, they do not take their place as the equal and helpmate of the men, but as their mental and physical inferiors ; they are treated more as servants than wives, and all manner of manual labour falls upon their frail shoulders. In stature they are infinitely inferior to the men, while their faces seldom, if ever, relax into a smile. Few indeed can write their own names, let alone read.

Their dress, however, is picturesque : a long, graceful coat hanging from the shoulders, shaped at the waist and sleeveless—it is often made in the most delicate shades, and the gold embroidery is exquisite ; a round cap upon the head, smaller than the men's, and without the King's initials and the five round circles. The

ONE IS INSTANTLY STRUCK BY THE SPLENDID APPEARANCE OF THE MEN. NJEGUŠI. (MONTENEGRO)

married women wear a black silk shawl draped from the hair and hanging down upon the shoulders.

We were now mounting steadily up the precipitous rocks, shaped in a half-circle. Below lay Njeguši, its houses scattered like leaves by the wind; the small fertile plain ends in the grey limestone. We are climbing in great arms up the naked face of rock. Here and there small hollows are scooped out of the rock, and a handful of earth aids the owners of some half-hidden hut to live. We can see over the grey rise beyond Njeguši, and the blue Adria for a last time flashes into view. The road is a trifle narrow, but quite good. Only a minute longer ere we reach the summit; up we go in search of El Dorado, and now—town and sea have vanished. We pass for a few seconds among the rocks, and the horizon is bounded by the giant mountains of Albania, while far below, half hidden by the distance, we can see the glimmer of water. It is the lake of Skutari in Albania. I think that the traveller to Cetinje, even before he realises what those far peaks mean and what manner of people are they that dwell among them, finds more to marvel at in the almost terrifying aspect of the land. As one loses sight of the sea and enters the waste of rocks, it is as though a great door had swung-to behind one; the sun may shine, but it casts no appearance of warmth upon the dead world of grey; not a tree or verdant shrub relieves the tired eyes. "The desolation is like that of a silent volcano, arid as if internal fires had burnt out the juices of the earth."[1]

It is a dead world, a world of silence, deep and impressive; rugged grey rocks tower above and beneath one, billows of grey mountains undulate into the distance; not a trickle of water is to be found, and madness and death await the unfortunate stranger who should attempt to cross this desert. So great, so overpowering is the

[1] Stillman.

effect produced that few indeed can repress an exclamation of wonderment as the scene opens before the eyes. It is as though one were gazing upon another world, a world that has been, now dead and forgotten, where life, after a final struggle, had been submerged, or as though a mythical deluge had but just subsided. Indeed, one involuntarily shudders at sight of the silent expanse.

Swiftly we were dropping, gliding between the rocks down from the heights, ourselves the only moving thing in sight. How many cycles of ages must elapse before this dear, old, living world of ours relapses into a like state ; it makes one wish that mother earth would hit some wandering star and be instantly sped to the sun in fragments ere such a thing should come to pass. Yet this is the spot where the children of freedom could alone defy their enemies. Rather than exist in the fertile valleys under a conqueror's yoke those old-world heroes made their homes among the Karst : it only proves how tenacious is Nature, and how she adapts herself to circumstances, that she should teach these wild children of hers the secret of the Karst; in some hidden hollow she found them water, some sheltered nook reared for them crops ; and so they have lived, fought and died to preserve for their children untrammelled freedom and such a history that the whole world can hardly find its equal.

Just as the door of the world-we-know closes at our heels, another door opens before us and Cetinje comes into view, situated in the centre of a small plain, well cultivated, but surrounded by the naked mountains of the Karst. Upon our right we can see the pedestal-like summit of the Lovchen, the Sacred Mountain of Montenegro, upon whose flat summit a little chapel has been built, which contains the body of Peter II, the last Vladika and Grand Uncle of King Nikolas, who was at the one time the temporal and spiritual ruler of the land.

It does not take so very long to drop down the one

AT THE EXTREMITY OF THE SMALL PLAIN NESTLES CETINJE, SURROUNDED BY THE NAKED KARST.
(MONTENEGRO)

thousand two hundred feet to the plain ; in big loops and circles the road twists its treacherous way, till at last we are facing a long broad road that ends among the houses some two miles distant. We meet and pass many Montenegrans, each with his revolver, and many are the salutes we receive. Cetinje is composed of one broad street, not unlike a South African township. Space is no object, the houses are tiny to the ordinary tourist's eye, for you must know that this is the tiniest capital in Europe. Our rooms were awaiting us, and it was not without some emotion that we drew up before the doorway of the hotel, more than charmed with our first introduction *en auto* to the Crnagora. Cetinje and I are old friends, and, as usual, I found many new regulations in force, and very many indications of the firm hand and quick brain of King Nikolas. Cetinje itself is precisely the same ; nothing in Cetinje ever seems to change, the diplomatic embassies looking for all the world like a row of cottages sandwiched between the State offices of the different ministers. Utter simplicity is the keynote of everything in Montenegro. Even King Nikolas' palace only retains its name through courtesy ; indeed, the only distinction that it possesses is in being the biggest house in this tiny capital, and is not half so imposing as the Russian Legation, which is built outside the town, and which, for diplomatic reasons, is as gorgeous and magnificent as that country would make the simple Montenegran believe she is. Indeed, one must not mention anything disparaging to Russia while a guest of the Crnagora, for Russia is all-powerful in the little kingdom, that is, as powerful as popularity can make her ; but even the " Little Father " must have a care lest he offend the inborn love of absolute freedom that is ever uppermost in these highland warriors. Though Russia sends guns and swords galore, has presented the ikons for her churches, and, it is even whispered, provided a

large and substantial subsidy towards the maintenance of her army, Montenegro, though acknowledging these benefits with unbounded loyalty, will not relinquish one iota of her independence or sacrifice for a moment her glorious traditions by allying herself with any country, however powerful, and so risking the perfect freedom of her children in the grip of another land, no matter how friendly and akin that land may be.

Photography we now discovered was strictly prohibited. The military frontier guard at Njeguši had orders to politely but firmly retain all kodaks and cameras in their safe keeping and only to return them when their owners leave the little kingdom. A feature that I was much pleased to see was the new coinage, which has King Nikolas' head upon one side and the ancient arms of Montenegro upon the other. This is quickly ousting the Austrian krone; even in Cattaro and Ragusa it is currency. The coins, in three sizes, look exceedingly handsome, and are a source of no little pride to the country folk. The tobacco industry has grown greatly since our last visit, and cigarettes, particularly well made and packed, are to be had at ridiculously cheap prices; but the latest and most brilliant of King Nikolas' moves is his passion for road-making and his service of public motor buses from Cattaro to Nikšić. The instant that the lover of Montenegro in its primitive state hears of the new departure the word "sacrilege" instantly occurs, and so it is sacrilege in its worst and most awful form; but let us look at it through King Nikolas' eyes. He is the "father" and leader of a nation far up in the hills, beyond the ordinary reach of civilisation. Till thirty years ago Montenegro was not even recognised as a country or her people as a nation; every second might bring a hoard of Moslems swooping down upon the capital; every moment might mean the difference between life and death to her people, where hours alone

were needed to mobilise every able-bodied man to the defence of his homeland, and where the population of a town or village was reckoned only by "rifles."

After the final exploits of King and people the eyes of all Europe are centred upon this little congregation of heroes; their appeals for independence drew attention to their heroic deeds, to five centuries of oppression and constant warfare against a giant enemy, and to their still retained and absolute freedom, won and held only through the constant shedding of her children's blood; from king to beggar—a land of heroes. And when the world rang with their latest deeds were the powers to close their ears to her appeals for fair play and again sully themselves by weak concession to the "Great Assassin?" As Austria gained the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, so the Berlin Treaty rendered Montenegro her freedom and independence, and she has never forgotten how England stood her friend, and how Mr. Gladstone wrested Dolcigno from the wily Infidel, so that Montenegro should have another seaport than Antivari, overshadowed by Austria. I may be thought to have wandered from my subject and be blamed for repeating what everyone knows, but I am endeavouring to show how savage and isolated Montenegro must have been thirty years ago and what she owes to the quick brain and ready arm of her "Father," King Nikolas.

When her independence was a *fait accompli* King Nikolas was enabled to turn from war to peace, only to find that his land, prepared upon every hand to resist whatever warlike inroad might be attempted, was without defence as far as finances and modern civilisation were concerned, and as unprepared as, say, little Monaco were it to be forsaken by the powers and open to the first hostile country that desired the little principality. Imagine the land thirty years ago, savage to a degree, see for yourself Montenegro as she is to-day, and you will

marvel at the change ; yet ninety per cent, nay ninety-nine per cent, of the tourists who visit Cetinje have not the slightest knowledge of this wondrous little land. They marvel at the road, they grumble at the smallness of Cetinje, and one lady—English, I am sorry to say—actually complained that the new motor service was "bumpy," and that the buses were exceedingly badly constructed. Indeed, the average visitor to Cetinje has little sympathy with the ambitions or traditions of the people, and judges only with the eyes of to-day, eyes that only know, and have ever known, the luxury and comforts of a civilised land.

What has made Montenegro what she is, you will ask ? The answer you will hear from every lip, it might be read in every loyal heart, and will you but use your eyes, every new stone bears the word—"Nikolas." To understand this you must know something of the man, for King Nikolas is a man in every sense of the word. His valour is proven ; he himself led his troops in the old days ; to-day he is still a crack shot with gun or pistol ; he is one of the most able diplomats in Europe, and practically controls the whole finances of the little kingdom himself. He inherits his family's talent and love of verse ; his dramatic poem, "The Queen of the Balkans," clearly proves him to be the possessor of true genius, as it does of dramatic power.

King Nikolas has written many beautiful and patriotic odes, and is universally acknowledged to be the first living Serb poet. He has instituted post offices, banks and hospitals, has fostered industries and arts. Cetinje boasts of a tiny theatre where, occasionally, a strolling company performs. Two newspapers also owe their origin to the King. As in the case of Japan, the King encourages foreign enterprise, and in order that his subjects might learn, introduced foreign doctors and trainers for the army he founded, while young Monte-

negro was distributed throughout other lands, learning and learning, and in time returning, so that year by year Montenegro is becoming more self-supporting.

The offer made by an Italian company to run a light railway from Antivari to Vir Pazar over the Sutormann Pass, thus connecting the Adriatic with the lake of Skutari, was accepted by the King, and this in time will fall into Montenegro's hands. The Grand Hotel in Cetinje, where a French *chef* and an Italian manager together provide the traveller with most excellent fare, is entirely due to King Nikolas' encouragement, his only stipulation being that it must be Montenegran owned.

Throughout his peaceful career the King has had one great and at times almost overpowering difficulty to contend with—the Montenegran character. You may in a quarter of a century outwardly civilise a land, but you cannot hope to change the nature of her people; and this King Nikolas found. He cannot root out the deep antipathy for work of any kind that possesses the people; for centuries and centuries the Montenegran has looked upon himself only as a fighting man. When scarcely old enough to hold a rifle he has balanced himself against the walls of his father's cottage and shot his man with the rest, while his tiny sister's baby fingers are trying to load a gun. Thus immersed from his infancy in an atmosphere of danger, when the sight of a dying comrade awakens only feelings of revenge, he has come to despise all manner of manual labour as beneath his dignity, relegating it to the women, so that now peace and security have come he can scarcely realise that the fighting days are over. To-day he carries his loaded revolver conspicuously in his belt, and his right hand is for ever playing with the butt; towards the borders of Albania and Macedonia he carries also his rifle, which never leaves his hand, as I shall have opportunity, I hope, of illustrating.

If you go even into the post office at Cetinje the man who serves you with a stamp still revels in the fantastic costume and carries his loaded revolver like the rest. There is no attempt at bravado, no flourishing of weapons ; for when a revolver is drawn it is for strict business alone, the drawer's life depending upon his being a trifle ahead of his enemy.

Women occupy an inferior position to the men, but, thanks again to King Nikolas, each year much is being done to relieve their hard lot, though to-day they are debarred from the kiss which, as among the Orthodox peasants we saw at Sarájevo, takes place only between man and man. Women may only salute their lord's hand. In almost every part of Montenegro they are not allowed to sit down with the men at table, but must stand, nor are they ever seen sitting at the cafés their husbands are addicted to so much.

A great portion of the land is cursed by the lack of water, and this liquid, which is far more precious than wine, has to be carried by immense labour up from the valleys to the little villages among the rocks. This task is apportioned to the women, young girls, mere children, and old women, bent and crippled by years of this cruel toil, drag themselves wearily up the steep precipices all the long day ; it is pitiable to see the old women here and there resting their loads upon a stone, trying to straighten their bent backs, but more especially the girls ; long before they gain their full strength, they have the heavy wooden barrels fastened to their backs and strapped across their breasts, which are flattened cruelly by the tight thongs, and give them almost a deformed appearance. This alone prejudices the minds of visitors who come to Montenegro as citizens of to-day and do not know how much harder and barbarous was the treatment of these poor women a score of years ago, before the present ruler took up the matter.

We see, then, from time immemorable the inferior position held by the woman; to-day it is often used almost as a term of reproach, a man who, for punishment, has been deprived of his weapons being called by his comrades a "woman." I know of a case where a merchant of Montenegro, a personal friend of the King, and who often dines at the royal table, is the possessor of a wife whose occupation would be grumbled at by a char-woman at home, and who lives only at her lord's will, so to speak. Before marriage the girls are permitted to wear a little round cap, similar to the men, only without the Prince's initials, "H.I.," surrounded by the five golden circles; after marriage a black handkerchief is worn draped from the hair on to the shoulders. It is curious to watch a group of young girls; their faces might be cast from the same mould, so alike are they, feature for feature.

The visitor to Montenegro generally works up a great indignation at the treatment of women in the land, but there is a fact that is known to few and one I have never heard boasted of. It is that during the fierce wars between the Montenegrans and the Turks, when many of the Christian inhabitants of the Herzegovina were wont to seek shelter in Montenegro, there are instances of Turkish women and children actually seeking and finding protection and nourishment among the brave Montenegrans, while their own fathers and brothers were fighting their hosts. Imagine, if you can, what this means. We have but to remember the Bulgarian horrors or the Armenian atrocities to understand the inherent difference between the two races.

Though fierce and brutal to their enemies, the Montenegrans have always respected women and children, treating them as they would their own.

We must remember that in all savage lands the characteristics of the people, be they virtues or vices, are

greatly exaggerated when compared with our modern standard. To our eyes the Montenegrans treat their women barbarously, yet, though the casual visitor has not a suspicion of it, they nevertheless endow them with many privileges unaccorded to women in more civilised lands to-day. For instance, under a code of laws issued by Prince Danilo in 1855, they rank at law as equals of men. Though treated to a great extent as beasts of burden by the men, they are yet shown a certain rugged chivalry that one would scarcely credit. A woman's person is sacred; she can be forced to toil incessantly, but no weapon may be lifted against her. No man would arrest another man, be his offence what it might, so long as that man's wife protected him by her presence. Even in the case of the vendetta, most deadly of all the unwritten code of honour, a man is safe so long as his wife remains by his side. Unfaithfulness is unknown throughout the land, and the home-life, though crude, is nevertheless chaste and in a rugged way not unhappy.

I have wandered on to this apparent by-path only to show what a bigoted and savage mind King Nikolas has to contend with in all his reforms and innovations, the men despising labour as beneath their dignity and holding themselves ready for that call to arms that never comes, and the women alone performing the menial work. They can scarcely realise how everything has altered; the necessity of instant readiness for warfare has vanished, an effective standing army been formed; despised labour has become a very necessity in order to live. Strangers are welcomed, with their industry, as missionaries of civilisation and, sad to relate, in every case overshadow these children of nature. For instance, in Podgorica, the commercial capital of Montenegro, a friend we made, settled permanently in the land, told us many instances of the unbusiness-like and perfectly helpless commercial instincts of the warriors, while the

Catholics or, better by far, the Turks are strictly business-like and straightforward, while the Orthodox are shuffling and have no idea of keeping an agreement. This is not, of course, a reflection upon their honour, for if a commercial falsehood were pointed out to a Montenegran as detrimental to his honour there is no nation on earth who would go to such lengths to clear their name. It is simply the inborn contempt for anything not savouring of actual warfare that makes the Montenegran so inferior to others and so absolutely helpless in all business matters.

The curious thing is that a young Montenegran will tell you in all sincerity that he is a hero, and this he actually believes, though he may not have done a single notable thing in all his life ; yet his ancestors bequeathed to him that title, and he firmly believes in his ability to live up to it should occasion arise. Few people can realise what the King has had to contend with, and it is little wonder that he has relied to a great extent upon the rising generation, whose minds, thanks to his teaching, should be fit to face, and capable of dealing with, the new era. But, alas ! " young Montenegro " has not that pressing danger of total annihilation that faced their fathers, made them forget all personal grievances and aspirations, and bound them together solely for the good of their country. This wonderful, bigoted if you will, yet loyal old stock shared ties that could never be broken ; their Prince was more to them than a mere ruler, he was their " Father "—one of themselves who, for bravery and ability, earned his proud position as a leader of heroes.

In their place another and quite new population has grown up, a peculiar half-and-half kind of people, to whom a little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing ; luckily imbued with the great traditions of loyalty, yet possessing a fatal sense of over-civilisation and its unavoidable accompaniment of Socialism, first they de-

manded a Constitution which, though their minds were hardly in a fit state to receive it, King Nikolas, with that almost fatherly love that has characterised all his dealings with his people, granted them five years ago, though in a mild form, wisely keeping the absolute veto in his own hands. Much of the trouble is undoubtedly caused by that which occasioned the excellent proverb "Satan finds mischief," etc., and whereas in the old days every man was fully occupied in fighting or other hazardous employment, to-day this, their only occupation, has vanished, and instead of taking to despised work almost the total portion of male Montenegro spends its time in utter idleness, parading the streets or sitting talking in one of the thousands of little cafés that find a good living throughout the land.

Thus now, in his later years, when peace reigns supreme, when prosperity is slowly but surely coming to the land, King Nikolas has to face another enemy, a vile, mean, invisible one, that no longer is bound by the old Montenegran rules of honourable warfare, but crawls along the ground beneath the thick grass and strikes by the poisoned dagger or the deadly bomb. Still, King Nikolas is to-day the same decisive ruler and able statesman he was in the old days; though merciful to a degree for most offences, he is merciless to political prisoners, and rightly so.

It is no longer from Turkey that Montenegro has aught to fear; indeed, the Turks and the Montenegrans, strange as it seems, are upon friendly terms and unite in turning as solid a front as possible to their mutual enemy—Austria. Montenegro has little cause to love the Dual Empire, which each year strives to suppress the great Serb dream of independence. Serbia herself is unfortunately situated, being open to easy attack, while in the case of Montenegro, whose geographical position defies so direct a course, Austria has resorted to a far

more subtle method of aggression, that of starvation. Along the eastern frontier of Bosnia she has constructed a strong line of fortifications; upon the Adriatic her frontier extends and overshadows Antivari; from the Bay of Cattaro the whole of the great road is commanded by the guns of the forts and by the ships beneath.

Up till two years ago Austria occupied the Sandjak of Novi Pazar, and to-day her "moral" influence in Albania is considerable.

Montenegro is not rich enough to stand a prolonged siege without outside help; her finances, strengthening each year, would not suffice for a campaign. She has, moreover, an immensely larger area of territory to defend than in former days, and it would be impossible adequately to garrison her frontiers, while the old method of hand-to-hand fighting would avail her little to-day, when her enemy desires not to fight but to starve her into submission. The Turk, like his neighbour, has a long debt owing to Austria for the loss of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, so that whereas in former times the Moslem and the Orthodox were inveterate foes, to-day they are bound together by common hatred against their powerful enemy the Catholic.

King Nikolas' far-seeing mind long since grasped what his hot-headed people failed to understand—the immense change that civilisation has wrought. He sees the dangers that threaten his land, and his is the brain that is fighting many subtle brains towards the one great end—peace. He perceives the iron hand where his followers only see the velvet glove.

The friend of Montenegro cannot but admire the steadfast policy that King Nikolas has always followed. His position is no sinecure; not only has he to grasp each new danger, but he must restrain his people from resenting what they imagine to be some slight upon their honour, blind to the fact that the insult may be deliberately

intended to provoke a hostile act. The King reads between the lines, and it devolves upon him to explain to his followers, just as a man would to his children, in childish words, the true aspect of the case and to counsel forbearance. King Nikolas feels personally every thrill that passes through the minds of his people, it is even asserted that he knows each of his subjects by name, which is, of course, exaggeration, but which, nevertheless, only goes to prove how dearly he loves his land and his " children."

Let us look at the state of Montenegro to-day. She has an excellent army, for which Russia is said to provide the " necessary " ; it is a body of men splendidly trained and capable of maintaining the highest traditions of the land. Whereas ten years ago Government officials received their pay six months or more behind time, it is now sent to them within fifty hours ; schools are provided and, as I said, hospitals and even newspapers. King Nikolas does all in his power to foster the national feeling of patriotism, and insists that so long as his subjects retain their revolvers they shall be trained in their use, and that their weapons shall be spick-and-span and loaded in five chambers. It is no uncommon thing for the King to stop a man in the street and inspect his gun ; should it not be perfect in every respect the unlucky owner has his immediate future gratuitously provided for. It is a great pity that the Montenegran has taken to carrying the effeminate and unwieldy umbrella. It is related how not so long ago the King came upon one of his subjects carrying one and that he broke it over the man's back ; but the custom has become very common, though it is doubtful if a man could be found who would let one accompany him into his King's presence.

Until a few years ago King Nikolas acted as sole judge in cases of litigation, which he heard under a large

tree in his open garden ; but latterly he has instituted courts of justice where cases can be tried, but where counsel is unknown, the disputants stating their own cases and calling their witnesses. So high a reputation has Montenegran justice gained that, upon the frontiers, the Albanians and Turks will bring their cases to lay before a Montenegran judge in preference to a Moslem one. The King is very particular to keep entirely to the country dress, which suits his sturdy figure and clear eyes to perfection. Any of his people can obtain an audience, for he is still their " father " and adviser, and his shoulders are broad enough to bear their troubles and his heart is ever ready to respond to their appeals.

Altogether, Montenegro presents a problem of intense interest, and one that we are now prepared to study, to probe deeper into this " land of promise," and to admire a nation which, to quote Mr. Gladstone's words, possesses " war annals above all the war annals of the world."

CHAPTER XIII

THE HEART OF CRNAGORA

CANNOT OBTAIN BENZINE—ARRANGEMENTS WITH MONTENEGRAN GOVERNMENT—AUDIENCE WITH THE KING ARRANGED—DEPARTURE FROM CETINJE—DRIVE INTO THE INTERIOR—RJEKA—PLAIN OF ZETA—PODGORICA AND ALBANIA—VIZIER BRIDGE—CLIMB TO OSTROG—NIKŠIĆ—"HOTEL AMERICANO"—A MONTENEGRAN DINNER—MARKET DAY—DEPARTURE—LAST VIEW OF NIKŠIĆ.

WE had crossed the Bocche on a Saturday and left instructions that the pontoon should meet us upon the following Saturday, allowing a week, which, as the sequel shows, was perfectly inadequate for the distance to be covered. Therefore on Sunday morning much had to be done before we could proceed. We had to plan out the possible tours, but these could not be decided until I had consulted Mr. Vokovitch, the Minister of the Interior.

Montenegro is, roughly, diamond-shaped; two corners run straight inland, the third being a short distance from the coast at Cattaro, the fourth upon the coast itself and comprising Antivari and Dolcigno. Thus upon one side she is bounded by Albania and Macedonia; upon another by Novi Pazar; upon the third by Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the fourth by Dalmatia and the deep Adriatic. Cetinje, though only twenty miles from Austrian territory, is the safest capital, standing as it

does in a fertile plain 2500 feet high and in the midst of Nature's most efficient defences. She is protected in every direction, and between her and the lake of Skutari lies a rock-strewn valley 2500 feet in depth, which has proved a death-trap from time immemorial to the Infidel.

Fourteen miles from Cetinje lies Rjeka, a little village upon the lake of Skutari. This is a beautiful stretch of water, some thirty-five miles long, one end entering Montenegro, whereon she possesses three stations, Rjeka, Vir Pazar and Plavnica, and from which a steamer plies daily to Skutari. Podgorica, the commercial capital of Montenegro, lies within a few miles of the Albanian frontier, formed by a line of gigantic mountains, naked and bare, and but a short eighteen miles from Rjeka, upon the left bank of the lake. A road again branches to the left from Podgorica to Nikšić, the interior capital of Montenegro, in the very heart of the land, where, so it is whispered, the King has designs of establishing his capital in place of Cetinje.

It was to Nikšić that we wished to go on the Sunday ; but first I had to obtain many necessary orders and make several vital arrangements. I rose early and before breakfast went in search of benzine. A local chemist, who spoke Italian excellently, could only supply a gallon or so. Mercédès had only about ten gallons in her tank and seven extra ones in reserve. The chemist advised trying the motor-post garage, where the service kept their stock, situated a mile outside the town. Mercédès soon sped thither, but only to suffer disappointment. They had barely enough for themselves and were expecting a shipload from Fiume every day, therefore they could spare none. It was rather a mournful party that sat down to breakfast later and discussed the situation. Our next duty lay in obtaining the necessary papers for our journey throughout the land and permission to use the forbidden camera. Mr. Reilly, our

minister at Cetinje, had unfortunately left the day before, so that my letters of introduction to him were useless. Indeed, just at that moment things looked very black, and I prepared to play my last card, my "intro" to the Minister of the Interior. Like many a forlorn hope, it carried the day, and from that moment troubles and anxieties were brushed from our path.

Mr. Vokovitch, the Home Secretary, as we would term him, spoke Italian and French and was politeness itself, taking great interest in our prospective journey. No other car, he said, save the King's, had ever passed Cetinje, so that we would again be pioneering. But for the necessary permission and help that we should need we must see Mr. Ramadamavitch, the Minister for Foreign Affairs; and he very kindly entrusted me to the care of the Postmaster-General, Mr. Popovitch (it took some time before I quite mastered these Slav names), who personally conducted me to the Foreign Minister, to whom I was duly introduced. It was my lot to see more of Mr. Ramadamavitch than any other member of the Government, and I take this opportunity of expressing our sincere thanks for his invaluable help, without which it would have been quite impossible to pass Cetinje. It so happened, though we knew it not, that there were grave internal troubles shaking the tiny kingdom. Many things that puzzled us were explained later, but at the time I was rather surprised when Mr. Ramadamavitch offered to send a captain of the King's own household as interpreter, to watch over our interests. I had to refuse this, much to my regret, for the luggage and ourselves are packed into Mercédès with mathematical exactness, the extra space being unattainable; in addition, we had many gallons of spirit and water to find room for.

Mr. Ramadamavitch took a keen interest in our journey, so that after half an hour's close discussion we determined upon the following:—That afternoon (Sun-

day), to Nikšić, seventy miles. Monday, back to Podgorica, thirty-five miles. Tuesday, to Plavnica and then Kolašin and back, ninety miles. (This was a totally new road just constructed, passing through a portion of Montenegro till now practically unknown to visitors.) Wednesday, back to Cetinje, thirty-five miles, to obtain a fresh supply of petrol, and more important still, to have an audience of King Nikolas. (I have ever been unfortunate in this respect, never having had the honour of speaking with the King, as upon each visit His Majesty was absent from Cetinje ; therefore I looked forward with no little interest to our interview with this remarkable man, whose history we knew so well and whose character appeals so strongly to every Englishman.) Friday, to Vir Pazar, thirty miles, leave the car there and take the boat to Skutari in Albania, returning on Saturday, and same night sleep at Antivari. Sunday, to Dolcigno ; Monday, to Cetinje ; and Tuesday, back to Ragusa. Thus did we carefully plan out our tour, as though we had been running a special train along a well-used track, little dreaming of the trials and adventures that awaited us.

Looking back upon what actually happened, it is astounding that we actually carried out the main feature of the programme so well. As to permission to take photos, Mr. Ramadamavitch foresaw little difficulty. In addition, we should be furnished with a special paper that would be a kind of glorified Open Sesame, which should be addressed to every official in Montenegro, giving us free access, and in addition permission to photograph where and what we would.

Later we found that many small comforts had been provided and disagreeable contingencies forestalled, and in reality we were the guests of the King, to whose generosity we owed more than we knew at the time. The Prime Minister's signature would be essential to the

permit, our friend said, and he himself would bring the necessary document to the hotel in about an hour's time. This was after eleven and much remained to be done. First we had to wire to the Austrian Naval Authorities, changing the day for the pontoon from Saturday to the Tuesday following. Then came the almost insurmountable question of benzine. Where, oh where, could we get it? When the ship came in there would be plenty, but till then——! Here Fate again took a hand in the game and played up for us in a brilliant manner. One of the street boys, who (another sign of degenerate civilisation !) have learnt to hang about the door of the hotel and pester their visitors (ignorant how to deal with such), appeared before me, as I was wandering back to the hotel, with the news that he had discovered much benzine. Would I follow him?

In ten minutes we reached the chemist's shop and almost next door a grocer's, wherein several picturesque-looking specimens had congregated in anticipation of my arrival. The rascal who kept the store had more Italian than Montenegran blood in him, and I was instantly prepared for trouble. It so happened that he possessed—oh joy !—twelve full gallons, which I obtained for the modest price of seven kronen per gallon. All this we could carry upon the car, but we would need a further supply for Thursday. Of all people our chemist was the one to provide the necessary, for he sought me out to tell me how, rummaging in his cellar, he had discovered a bottle of benzine holding sixteen gallons, which he would sell for seven kronen per gallon. This I bought, paying him and having his receipt, stating that he would hold it in readiness for our return in four days, and that he would not part with one drop, however hardly pressed; and satisfied with his promises I returned to the hotel well pleased.

It was half-past twelve when the benzine was finally

packed. We carried twenty gallons in the tank and eight spare gallons in two tins. We had plenty of potted meat, butter and bread in sealed tins, biscuits, bovril and tea, so that the inner man was amply provided for. Mr. Ramadamavitch arrived at a quarter to one, bringing with him the paper signed by Mr. Tomanavitch, the Prime Minister, conferring upon the bearer magic-like authority. We lunched at the hotel before starting, and after bidding our friend adieu, took our places in Mercédès for our first dash into the heart of the Black Mountain. The day, which had dawned bright and clear, belied its promise ; great clouds rolled up from the south, quickly shutting out the blue sky ; light rain had commenced to fall and distant thunder rumbled a warning. We were certainly to be introduced to Montenegro in its war aspect, and to see it not as a land of smiling promise, but as a land of vengeance, breathing its centuries of savagery and warlike deeds.

It was two o'clock when we started. Nikšić was our destination—seventy miles—if the road was good, if not, Podgorica, half-way and close to wild Albania. As we returned the salutes of the red-coated crowd who collected to see us start, we wondered vaguely where and in what manner we should spend the coming night.

To one who has never passed Cetinje farther than Rjeka, that drive into the interior is a revelation. We had thought we knew what utter barrenness was during our drive through the Katunska, while the small fertile plains of Njeguši and Cetinje stood for the sole means of produce possessed by the Black Mountain ; but I think I am safe in saying that every casual visitor to Montenegro returns to Cattaro convinced that he has seen the country through and through, and rather thankful that Heaven has permitted him a safe return from such a land. Alas ! what a false impression.

Leaving Cetinje, the road at once commences to ascend,

winding amidst the rocks and passing high above the Russian Embassy and hospital, till the tiny red-roofed capital, unique in Europe, vanishes from view and naught is seen but grey, bleak rocks which now that the sun has disappeared take upon themselves a colder shade, as of steel, and seem to be threatening our upward progress, as though jealous of our passage through their midst. As we near the summit Sheila and I strain our eyes to be the first to resight that glorious panorama, unsurpassed in Europe, which Dorothy and I had viewed in the old days. Ken alone of our party had not seen it, and from our description he too was hungering for the view. It came at last, and we stopped Mercédès in order to drink our fill of what lay before us. I do not know whether fair or foul weather gives one a grander conception of Montenegro. I had seen this view many times before, but never had it appeared so overpowering and with such a sense of complete loneliness as now. A rock-strewn valley lies 1500 feet beneath us, ending in a spur of rock that stands yet another thousand feet above smiling Rjeka, which from here is quite invisible. Then, beyond to the right, as far as the eye can see, vast billows of mountains. It is almost dazzling to try to conceive the interminable space of arid peaks. In their midst lies the lovely lake of Skutari, one end illuminated by the sunshine streaming down from a break in the clouds, so that the still surface looks like a mirror of burnished gold.

> "Stern Albania's hills,
> Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland peak
> Robed half in mist, bedew'd with snowy rills,
> Arrang'd in many a dim and purple streak,
> Arise; and, as the clouds along them break,
> Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer;
> Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets its beak,
> Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear,
> And gathering storms."

To the left from the end of the lake stretches an immense range of cold, bleak hills, in whose midst rise the giant Upokremuje or "Mountains of the Damned," upon whose terrible slopes no living thing can exist and whose summits have never yet been trodden by a stranger. Follow the long line of Alps from their distant home, till the near hills hide them from view, and you will be gazing upon the borderland of savage Albania, wildest of all Turkey's provinces, wherein the authority of the Sultan counts for little and only might is right. The natural brilliant browns and purples of the distant rocks are now a cold grey, and save for the dazzling sunshine upon the lake there is scarcely a dash of colour visible. The whole scene has an awful grandeur of its own and is impressive to a degree, ominous in its sombre silence.

The drive down to Rjeka has a drop of just over 2500 feet, and is one that is not only an experience in the actual drive itself, but especially thrilling when one knows that one is passing over the identical ground that has formed the battlefield from time immemorial of the Cross and the Crescent, the Turk and the Montenegran. We are, after a few preliminary zigzags, eventually descending the left side of the rock-strewn valley. As the road follows the broken side of the mountain we round turns so sharp that it takes all my power to screw Mercédès round. It is quite impossible to know what surprise lies round the corner, and many and varied were the shocks we received from and gave to the gorgeous peasants returning with their cattle. Visions of the dangerous ascent flashed across my mind; indeed, it was ordained by Fate that we should make that hazardous passage four distinct times, so that we knew almost every turn upon our last ascent.

We now commenced to taste the joys of royalty, and the deference we received during our journeys was often overpowering. Each dignified warrior that we met

promptly doffed his hat, while the soldiers saluted; maidens and women bowed to the ground so humbly that at first we mistook their lowly salutations for sarcasm, till we discovered they were in absolute earnest. Once, as we flashed round a corner, we came upon four warriors, stalking majestically ahead of two or three women leading heavily laden mules and carrying heavy burdens themselves. During the next few seconds many things happened at once, the mules endeavouring to bolt back the way they had come or, as their owners endeavoured to drag them close to the rocky wall, commencing a strenuous fight to be the first to back over the precipice, where the nearest ground was some 1200 feet directly beneath. The moment we appeared the warriors were seized by the awful idea that the eye of Nikolas was upon them, so that in less time than it takes to record the fact the astonished mules were literally carried bodily and jammed against the rock, while their harassed owners endeavoured to render homage to us as we glided past.

Fifteen hundred feet down and one thousand feet above the lake we pass the spur of rock that ends the first valley, upon which stands a tiny café, where the weary traveller takes his first rest and, drinking the fiery liquor or the innocent *sirof*, can spend a delightful half-hour watching the glories about him before starting the great climb to the capital. It is indeed a favoured spot. Beneath, a tiny village nestles upon a silvery stream, which winds its way mysteriously out of the hills through a fruitful valley. Ever descending, we at last reach the end of this seemingly interminable hill and find ourselves in Rjeka.

Years ago I penetrated thus far by ordinary carriage, and I did not forget the experience for many days. Hours of continuous bumping, till every bone seemed to snap and I felt as though I had been filleted. It took, I think, just upon seven hours to regain the capital.

Rjeka is a delightful little place, situated amidst beautiful vine-clothed hills that half remind one of the Mozelle. A tiny steamboat makes its way up the river, thus conferring upon Rjeka the importance of being a port for Skutari. Until last year there was no communication with Vir Pazar and, of course, Antivari, save by boat from Rjeka; but now the King has constructed a road over the mountains, which it will be our lot later to sample. Rjeka, and indeed every spot upon the level of the lake, possesses an ideal winter climate, though unbearable in summer. While Cetinje shivers in mist and snow, when the keen blasts sweep along the broad streets, Rjeka revels in a climate that the Riviera might envy. The King has a palace here, or rather a château, where he is enabled to escape from the winter's keenest ravages in Cetinje, for the King suffers from rheumatism and must enjoy the gentle warmth of Rjeka.

The village itself is small, built upon the left bank in a kind of raised embankment, and across the wide road stands a long row of red-tiled houses, perhaps fifty at the most. The façades are light blue or pink and the few shops are bazaar-like in appearance. Tobacco, gunpowder, shot and revolver bullets can be purchased at the lowest possible cost. The scene is very brilliant, filled by the light blue, dark green and white coats of the men and women, who strut about and give the place a most picturesque air.

We did not linger at Rjeka, as it was well into the afternoon and over fifty miles of new and unknown road lay before us. Sweeping along by the river and acknowledging the multitude of salutes, we passed the King's villa and commenced a rather rough climb, rising some seven hundred feet above the stream. The mountain whose side we were clinging to was of the same uniform grey, composed of great limestone crags and

huge boulders welded together as by a seething volcano. Twisting this way and that, the road ascends rapidly, the surface exceedingly rough ; the three weeks' rain seemed to have washed all the loose surface off the road, leaving small boulders and stones protruding their sharp noses, giving Mercédès many a nasty jar which it was quite impossible to avoid.

We were astonished to see piled on one side of the road an unending row of broken stones, as though in readiness for a gigantic repair ; sometimes we traced these unbroken rows of stones for thirty miles, and often came upon long lines of men, without revolvers, but under the charge of warriors with them, busy breaking fresh stones. It was quite refreshing to see the men work, but whether or not they were prisoners I never found out. We were told that the King was only awaiting the arrival of steam-rollers from England to commence a road repair that will undoubtedly be a record for any country. At present the surface is shocking, and we received a jolting from whose worst results we were only saved by the springs. The road's width, which is never more than that of a lane at home, is decidedly narrow and occasioned us much trouble in passing vehicles. In fact, what with the twists and turns, the dangerous elbows, the rough surface, the narrowness, the precipice upon our left and the continuous crowds of peasants with their cattle, our time was fully taken up. Once we met the motor-bus, which came lumbering along, and seeing us politely drew to one side, running two wheels high upon the stone heaps. Even then we had much trouble in scraping past. The driver and passengers stood up, uncovered, and bowed deeply as we went by, and were rewarded by nods and smiles from Sheila and Dorothy, for I was too busy steering Mercédès and Ken endeavouring to ward off the bus.

The views of the river are perfectly enchanting,

THE RIVER WINDS ITS WAY FROM RJEKA INTO THE LAKE OF SKUTARI. (MONTENEGRO)

especially as the sun now pushed himself through the clouds, throwing into contrast the many shades of green and grey, blending together in perfect harmony.

Where the road reaches its highest point the river takes a sharp right-handed bend and makes for the lake through a series of fairy-like green hills, a beautiful garden, incredibly restful to our tired eyes. We then lose sight of the lake and river and cross a high plateau of rocks and green shrubs, ascending and descending with the twisty and bumpy road. As we progressed the people became, if anything, more ceremonious in their attentions, running a considerable distance to catch sight of us and bowing deeply as we passed.

How truly we gather an insight into the lives of the people ; their very hearts seem to be open to us. Cottages, poor and naked, spring up like magic, taking form from the rough hill-side, only to dissolve the next moment into the great grey landscape. Here and there, beside such a hut, a space has been hewn in the rock and filled with soil wrested laboriously from the bare hill-side, a pathetic reminder of the life struggle that these children of Montenegro wage with nature. Did we stop but a moment near a house door, the occupant—invariably a sturdy old man with wrinkled face and long moustache, yet carrying his years as befitted the warrior he was—would instantly appear, bearing a tray on which were a number of glasses and a bottle of vile-tasting white brandy. There is no getting away from his hospitality, and such incidents often became quite embarrassing ; truly one may go far before meeting such a nation as this. Brave, impulsive and generous to recklessness, they receive the stranger without suspicion, who, while in their land, will find himself toasted and feasted till he can scarcely believe that his hosts are, themselves, upon the verge of starvation. Hardly has a Montenegran spoken to one than he orders drinks ; it is absolutely hopeless to attempt

to refuse, as this constitutes a serious affront. During our stay we kept a wary look-out, after the first time or so, and directly a Montenegran spoke we would order drinks and cigarettes instantly, and keep on doing so. Usually this acted well, for, as our time was limited, we escaped before a return order could be given.

Presently we reached the end of the barren range of low mountains that we were crossing, and came to the serpentine descent to the lake's level once more. We now found ourselves gazing upon the renowned plain of Zeta, stretching in the form of an immense isosceles triangle, having a broad base upon the lake of Skutari and gradually tapering far inland. Across the deep rich vegetation rises the gigantic Alps of Albania, towering high above us some fifteen or twenty miles away. At their base a white streak through our glasses resolves itself into a long, low town, Podgorica, the commercial capital of Montenegro, upon the borderland. Save for its dangerous position, it would undoubtedly have become the capital of the land ; but Albania, gazing down with threatening nearness, forbids such a thought.

Our road descends, winding amidst the rocks, and reaching the level cuts across the great plain. One must see and cross this plain in order to realise where Montenegro gains her support ; see the rich corn and maize, the green lands whereon cattle and horses are bred. No wonder the people living among the Karst can exist when food and plenty lies here for the fetching. Here is grown in large quantities the flour from which is made insect powder, an industry that forms no mean percentage of the exports of Montenegro. It is indeed a land flowing with milk and honey that we are now crossing, and a perfect, an astounding revelation to the traveller who knows only the immediate surroundings of Cetinje. The road itself, no less than the country, reveals what strides road-making has made ; by the King's command this

ACROSS THE IMMENSE PLAIN OF ZETA RISE THE MOUNTAINS OF ALBANIA. (MONTENEGRO)

remarkable road has been constructed, running straight as an arrow, and bordered by green trees, which shelter it from the almost unbearable glare of the sun. In many places the surface leaves much to be desired, but here and there we have stretches of wonderful excellence.

Very soon we come upon an ages-old river flowing between rocky banks in eddying whirlpools, and not unlike the savage Narenta. Indeed, this river, the Moraca by name, bears a strong, almost father-like resemblance to the spirit of old Mostar ; its banks are more formidable, the petrified sponge-like formation more pronounced. Like the Narenta, it bears a sinister reputation, and the man or beast who falls into its embrace is doomed to speedy destruction. For cycles of centuries the swift eddies have swirled through this smiling plain, working their way deeper and deeper till even a short distance away its very existence might remain unsuspected. The road reaches a beautiful old bridge, built by a Turkish Vizier, quite throwing into shade the stone bridge at Rjeka. They say that upon occasion the river overflows both banks, and the sight of the struggling waters, savagely fighting and seeking only to destroy, must be of the grandest and most awful. The old bridge carries the road to Podgorica, only a few miles away and our destination for the following day. Staying only long enough to admire the rugged beauty of the scene, we continued our journey along the same side of the stream. One of the things that impressed us was the countless red-coated figures seen upon every side ; they are Montenegro's soldiers, sharp-sighted men, with sword, revolver and gun, who patrol the long line of frontier, keeping a vigilant eye upon the restless Albanian.

We are now following the great plain of Zeta. It will be remembered that till after the tenth century this land was known only by that name, and before that again as Dioclea. Dioclea, the birthplace of that great

Illyrian Emperor of Rome, is supposed to lie upon this road at about the spot over which we are passing. During Roman rule it was the capital of this province, but upon the fall of the Western Empire the land became known as Zeta, whose history I have related elsewhere. Only a few remains exist to-day, and there is no special sign to record the birthplace of that great divider of the Roman Empire, so that one may easily fly past little realising what ground one is crossing. In the same smiling valley lies Damlovgrav, a busy little village whose greatest importance in the eyes of the natives is a newly erected lunatic asylum, which far outshines the market in their estimation. We caused no little stir as we flashed through, and the gay folk at the café doorways had scarcely sprung to their feet than we were past. It was really delightful motoring along this road; save for some trouble in passing animals, we enjoyed a welcome rest.

Presently the great plain began to contract, the grey mountains upon either hand closing in and the plain quickly verging into a green valley. Some ten miles or more ere the rich vegetation vanishes against an acute angle of relentless mountains the road leaves the plain and takes one long wonderful slant up the left-hand range of hills; rising nearly two thousand feet without a variation, it is an engineering feat of which King Nikolas may well be proud. In a moment the whole aspect of the road has changed, from a peaceful highway it becomes a mountain pass, familiar with dizzy precipices and frowning rocks. Every moment the valley sinks farther below and seems to be shrinking as we watch it. The rocky hill-side forms one huge precipice, and the road's dangerous course is not lessened by the tortuous twists and angles as it follows the astounding inequalities. We are now entering a landscape that is bleakness personified, save for the glimpse we catch of

THE VIZIER BRIDGE LEADING TO PODGORICA. (MONTENEGRO)

the narrowing valley far below. Across the same valley rises a range of equally desolate mountains, and we can see our road zigzagging backwards and forwards upon them like a white thread. It passes close to the celebrated monastery of Ostrog, the Lourdes of the Balkans, world famous as the spot where Mirko (who, it will be remembered, earned for himself the proud name of "Sword of Montenegro"), the hero-father of King Nikolas, with a few comrades, was savagely besieged by the Turk, whose large army he successfully defied. Assault and fire were alike unavailing to dislodge him, and his deeds are to-day sung by many a blind troubadour to the tuneless humming of a melancholy *gusla*.

We have reached the spot where the two great mountain arms join, and the valley is hidden by gloom far below. All sign of verdure has now completely vanished, and we wind our way through a region that strikes a chill upon the heart. In bright sunshine it is awful enough, but when dark clouds obscure the sky and thunder rolls an ominous warning one sees the country in all its savage desolation. The eye is at first deceived by the shade of green thrown upon the bleak mountains by the hardy shrub that grows, as it were, out of the naked rock and seems to find sustenance where apparently none existeth. In truth it would prove a veritable death-trap for whosoever depended upon keeping life within him by trusting to what he could find. Where the green shrub grows there should be water. Never was an axiom more untrue. If you walk but a little way from the road you will find that the ground beneath is broken and arid, composed of millions of lava boulders, dried like stone, that a few minutes after the most tropical of rains have greedily devoured every drop of moisture. There is a Serb proverb to the effect that "when God made the world the bag which contained the stones burst, and the stones all fell upon Montenegro." Here and there a tiny

trickle of water accumulates in a small hollow, and is the instant excuse for half a dozen squalid huts built of the same interminable limestone. A score of aristocratic warriors will there live uncomfortably upon the incessant hard labour of their female relations, who, by intolerable and back-breaking work, gather a little soil from some natural hollow, and by constant attention a sickly crop of Indian corn keeps the wolf from the door and the male members of the community in dignified idleness. Many such villages as these we passed, and were accorded quite a royal welcome.

The road takes a cut over the desolate saddle that divides the plains of Zeta and Nikšić. We have yet a good thousand feet or more to climb, and our road twists backwards and forwards amidst the rocks. It is sometimes quite impossible, from a casual survey of the landscape, to pick out the few cottages that are dotted here and there at the base of the different peaks. It almost, though in a different sense, reminds one of the hamlets of old Castile, that spring out from their surroundings with such startling suddenness. The people are wretchedly poor, yet the men wear the long handsome coat, though of coarse white cloth manufactured in the country. No matter how poverty-stricken his household may be, each warrior carries a large revolver in his belt and a good supply of cartridges. He greets us by raising his hat with all the dignity of his blue-clothed brethren, and passes on his way with the stride of a lord of many acres. Though it cost his wife and children their dinner he would, were we to halt for a moment, produce glasses and insist upon our partaking of his hospitality. It is a wonderful land, a land where life is held of little value compared to honour, where a bullet settles all scores, and straight shooting is remembered in a man's favour by the relatives of the deceased and the court of inquiry. We are some three thousand feet above the

FAMOUS OLD OSTROG, DEAR TO THE HEART OF EVERY MONTENEGRAN. (NOTE THE ROAD IN THE DISTANCE)

lake when the road reaches its highest point, and we leave behind us the centuries-old scene of desolation to come into view of the cultivated plain of Nikšić, lying seven hundred feet beneath and two thousand four hundred feet above that of Podgorica.

It is like a favoured glimpse of the true life of Montenegro, a bird's-eye view of all that goes to make up the existence of this little kingdom: a great fertile plain, whereon cattle may safely graze; waving fields of corn. Yet, as though by way of warning, the surroundings are formed of one huge amphitheatre of sullen *karst*, the treacherous expanse of cruel hills that from every direction gaze down upon the peaceful scene with threatening disapproval. In the centre of this fair land lies Nikšić, Montenegro's northern capital, at equal distance from every frontier. It is said that only a lack of funds prevents the King from moving thither his estate. Nikšić possesses a fatal and dear memory to every Montenegran, for did not the " beloved Father " himself at the head of his " children " lead them to victory and wrest the old castle from the Infidel? Indeed, Nikšić represents the last actual victory that the Montenegran gained, and helped to bring more vividly to the powers the cry of the Crnagora.

Our road gradually, and in some places steeply, winds down to the plain amidst the maze of rocks, and we are upon a splendid example of road that soon brings us to the first house. The plain suffers greatly from floods, and the new road is, for quite a distance, built as a viaduct, a splendid piece of work that has been accomplished, so it is said, entirely through Russian help. Nikšić is, as we soon found every " town " in Montenegro to be, really a large village of one-roomed houses, with a splendid square not unlike that of Arras, in the Department of Pas-de-Calais. The hotel borders upon the square, and it is little wonder that we sailed past without seeing

the portentous sign "Hotel Americano," that all but obliterates the front of one of the little houses. Its chief distinction lay in the proud possession of two storeys, an acquisition that in this land lifts a house into the dignity of a mansion. Unfortunately we had to take a turn in the square in order to return to the "hotel," and so called unnecessary attention to our arrival.

It would be safe to say that had King Nikolas himself been suddenly transported into the centre of that great square at Nikšić he would not have caused more stir or gathered a larger or more interested crowd than that which we involuntarily accumulated. A surging red-coated mass awaited our return to the hotel. In the distance we could see other red figures hurrying, fearful lest they should be late. Colour runs riot, and of all the good-natured, child-like crowds this one stands supreme. To touch the white panels, the lamps, tyres and talc windows was joy unspeakable to these big children, who, we noticed, in addition to the usual revolvers, carried guns. Outside the hotel door, round two tables, sat several gorgeously clothed individuals, who as we arrived raised their caps with very dignified, old-world courtesy. The proprietor spoke Italian and was the proud possessor of a voice that a ship's boatswain might have envied; he bellowed at his servants in a manner that would have reduced to shaking imbeciles any servant other than a Montenegran. With our luggage we formed the vortex of a whirlpool and were carried bodily upstairs and deposited in our rooms. "What can we do for your excellencies? Is there aught that your graces would desire?" asked the proprietor, jealous to uphold the noblest traditions of this hospitable land. The world was ours, we had but to command.

I wonder where else upon the globe the traveller could find so warm a welcome? The moment we left our rooms three or four watchful servants rushed forward to

THE ROAD PASSES THROUGH A LAND BLASTED WITH UTTER BARRENNESS.
(TOWARDS NIKŠIĆ, MONTENEGRO)

offer their services and generally get in the way. Outside, Mercédès was each moment becoming more and more enshrouded, the crowd doubled itself in an incredibly short time, and Rodgers had long since given up the task of keeping the numerous hands "off" and relinquished Mercédès to her fate. Quite ten deep they crowded around her, these good-natured folk, so savage in appearance, yet so friendly in intent. One six-foot individual, in his anxiety to touch every part, clapped both hands hard upon the shining radiator. An appalling yell rent the air as, burnt and astounded, he leapt back six or eight feet, upsetting the crowd behind him and our gravity.

By some astounding freak of fate, the hotel possessed a tiny little garden, with a gateway just large enough to admit Mercédès. Carefully I backed her in, and she found room between a large summer-house on one side and a wall upon the other. The proprietor closed the gate, much to the disgust of the crowd, and she rested in comparative quietness, save for the continual personally conducted parties of the *élite* of Nikšić, who obtained private views.

Darkness was falling as we sauntered out to glean a faint idea of the town before dinner. Nikšić is well laid out, four long streets radiating from the main square. Like Cetinje, space is of no importance, and it seems as though Nikšić has set itself to solve the problem of how to cover as much ground with as few houses as possible. Not so long ago, when man's existence was alone excused by his ability to prevent someone else depriving him of it, the population of Nikšić was counted only by "rifles," old men, women and children being ignored.

If you watch the everlasting parade of the men, dressed in their gorgeous finery, you will notice the swing of the conqueror. It is the walk of the man who is conscious of his "power," his superiority to the rest of

mankind. There is a certain nobility in every man's bearing, an indescribable something that prevents him from taking part in anything approaching manual labour and a pride that designates it to the woman's lot. The spirit of the old-world knight errantry that despised anything savouring of "trade" is his to-day, with one great difference, and one that King Arthur and his knights would have strongly disapproved—the position of the woman. Their lot, as I mentioned before, is hard and thankless in the extreme. Born only to be mothers of the Montenegran, it is seldom that one sees a good-looking woman over thirty years of age. Faces get strained and backs bent; did we not know how much each year is being done to lighten their lot, all the glorious history of the land could not have made up for a thousandth part of the cruelty of their treatment.

It is justice to say that the hotel was remarkably good. I am, of course, speaking in comparison with what we expected to find; there is one thing in Montenegro that should warm the heart of every Britisher weary of Austria's barbarous custom of starving the visitor at night and endeavouring to fill him with food when the sun is at his hottest in the middle of the day. If they do not actually attain it, Montenegro comes very near to enjoying a "dinner" every evening. For weeks we groaned under Austrian feeding, and yet here, in the heart of the Black Mountain, we are told by the proprietor, cap in hand, that dinner will be served at eight. It was served in the summer-house, and we sat down with a distinguished company. The Minister of the Interior had arrived and took one end of the table; we had the other end; and the odd eight seats were occupied by all the local celebrities, including the doctor, the only man in modern dress save Ken and I. There was one Montenegran lady present; she sat next to myself and preserved a fitting silence during the meal, as though con-

IN THE CENTRE OF A GREAT PLAIN LIES NIKŠIĆ, THE NORTHERN CAPITAL OF MONTENEGRO

scious of the honour that was being done her by being permitted to exist in the male presence. All the hotel servants attended to our wants, and I think we had an average of two each standing behind our chairs.

The scene was illuminated by three flaring oil lamps, and the dresses of the men and the one local lady made a brave show. Indeed, we felt rather out of it in our modern costumes. To one side, almost within touching distance, Mercédès kept guard and no doubt formed the subject of conversation, for the guests often pointed to her with their knives. Five plates, one upon the other, but only one knife and fork, which after a course was carefully left upon the table ready for the next. Dinner commenced with cheese and pressed meats, then an unknown vegetable, followed by what we fondly imagined to be boiled rice and chicken, highly flavoured. Hard boiled beef with potatoes followed, and finally a frothy pudding, dessert and excellent coffee. Towards the end of the dinner two very handsomely dressed men appeared and were presented to the company, after having been solemnly kissed by the Minister. A strange custom this, and one we could never quite accustom ourselves to witnessing. Unlike the French and German equivalent, it possesses no fussiness, but is a quiet and dignified "smack" that echoes round for about two minutes.

Twice during the dinner I passed the Montenegran lady some dish before using it myself, and each time she nearly fell off her chair with astonishment and had hard work to realise the honour, while the men glared at me till I felt as though I had been detected in the act of spoiling a naughty child. "Try her with the cruet-stand or the potatoes," whispered Sheila mischievously, and Ken, being egged on by Dorothy, handed over the salt-cellar.

"*Hfala, hfala,*" ("Thank you, oh, thank you!"), the poor lady murmured, and so shy and awkward did she seem that our hearts were grieved, and Ken was under-

stood to mutter something with reference to her husband which, as no one save ourselves spoke English, passed unnoticed. After dinner we had a few minutes' conversation with the Minister, and were enabled to tell him how charmed we were with all we had seen and the promise of further joys. Like his compatriots, he, metaphorically speaking, laid Montenegro at our feet and expressed a hope that we should thoroughly enjoy his country. As we passed through the café on our way to our rooms one of the red-coated individuals who had risen with the rest upon our appearance accosted us in what he doubtless understood to be English (learnt in Gorgia) ; he kept a store, he informed us, and promptly ordered drinks all round. It was with difficulty that we escaped from his embarrassing attentions, promising to visit his store next day. We retired to rest after one of the most novel and enjoyable, not to say busy days, of the tour.

We were rather disappointed by the market next morning. It was not nearly so gorgeous and bizarre as we had hoped. Yet it has a certain distinction, and varies greatly from that of Cetinje, inasmuch as the peasants, pouring in from the countryside, carried guns, which they placed against their ware, thus giving themselves a very warlike appearance. Oh, but the colour of the streets ! Photograph if you will, you cannot gain the brilliancy that makes up more than half the loveliness of the picture. Throughout our passage, apart from the scenery, the fact that impressed itself most upon our minds was this ever-present colour, that is always delighting the eye. Your first impression is that there must be some great fête on, yet, after you have lived a week or more in the land, you commence to realise that this gay throng is the everyday life of the people. Red predominates ; the popular common type is the red-sleeved waistcoat, baggy blue trousers, white felt leggings,

OUR WELCOME TO NIKŠIĆ. THE RED-COATED CROWD STRUGGLING TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF MERCÉDÈS.
(MONTENEGRO)

brilliant sash with revolver and knife, and round patriotic hat. This is the ordinary man's garb and the national uniform of the army, and the police alone are distinguishable by the different metal badges on their caps, the officers wearing Russian swords slung from the shoulder. Of course the better class wear the beautiful long coat of deep green or the most delicate of blue. The women too, with their long, sleeveless jackets, shaped in at the waist, and of the most delicate shades, beautifully embroidered in gold, mingle with the men's. Look where you will, you see nothing but glitter—blue, green, red and gold intermingling, till you turn away dazed. Though the people starve at home they appear in public arrayed in costumes that a wealthy man might hesitate to buy. Nowhere can one hope to find such an inborn love of gorgeous splendour as that displayed by poverty-stricken Montenegro.

Our arrival had evidently been notified, for I was allowed to wander at will and to take what photos I chose without interference ; as a matter of fact, I had no trouble in getting groups, the only difficulty being in explaining why the finished photograph could not be produced upon the spot, and this was the only sorrow that my victims suffered—one soon forgotten in contemplation of the photographer.

Nikšić possesses a stately old Turkish castle, and we spent nearly an hour wandering over its ruins, accompanied by a beautifully bedecked gentleman who spoke excellent French and who very kindly acted as cicerone for our especial benefit. I should like again to express our appreciation of our reception. I remember once being told by a Frenchman, who was giving me his impressions of my own country, that the thing which most impressed him, even above the *perlisse* of *Londrés*, was our wonderful hospitality. He had stayed, it seems, in a few country houses and was never tired of relating how his

"host" put everything at his disposal and made him feel he was truly "at home." That is just the kind of feeling we had in Montenegro; everyone we met tried at once to do us a favour. "You are a guest of my country, ask for what you will," was the unspoken greeting of their eyes down to the very poorest peasant that saluted us. How truly were we made to feel this, and did we hesitate for a moment—to look at some battlement or view—the first educated warrior that approached would stop and explain it to us. All honour, then, to this brave little land, with a heart almost too big for its body.

We were sorry to leave Nikšić, sorry to say good-bye to the historical old castle that had played so great a part in the later history of the land, sorry to leave the hospitable people who crowded round the car as the luggage was being loaded—these big babies who were so easily pleased and as scrupulously honest as the renowned *cavalleros* of Spain. What we had left in the car remained untouched, not a thing was missing. It was curiosity, nothing more, that forced them to handle everything they could get at, especially those talc windows behind the tonneau. "Not glass," they told each other in child-like wonder, "not glass, and yet one may see through it." The Montenegran from Gorgia was there to see us off and acted as interpreter. "Yo' fellar, yo' com' back soon," he said in his quaint nigger talk, to the admiration of the crowd. "Guess yo' like this land, eh, what!" He was a queer specimen. Standing some six feet three, he made a brave show, but his manners left much to be desired. The proprietor himself handed the ladies into their seats, a deed that was perhaps the bravest thing he had ever done in his life, for most of male Nikšić looked on with strong disapproval. Ken and I came in for a great share of the send-off, and I took care to point out to Sheila and Dorothy that their existence was sanctioned solely for our pleasure, an

AN INTERESTED GROUP. NIKŠIĆ. (THE MEN WITH THEIR INSEPARABLE REVOLVERS, THE TWO UNMARRIED GIRLS UPON THE LEFT, TO THE RIGHT A MARRIED WOMAN WEARING A BLACK MANTILLA)

obvious fact that caused them to make many unkind references to our future punishment when they got us back into a civilised land.

" Yo' fellars, yo' com' back 'gain," our white-nigger friend reiterated.

" Oh, yes," I replied ; " but first we must go to England."

" Back to England," they echoed. Far-away England, through six countries by road and over the distant Alps, from the Adriatic to the Atlantic !

Leaving Nikšić, we pass its new cathedral, set upon a high pedestal that gives it a fair outlook for many miles and makes it a conspicuous landmark. Close beside it is King Nikolas' new palace ; both are built of white stone or plaster and have rather a gaudy appearance. Still, it serves as a reminder of a future capital in the making. Nikšić, from a commercial standpoint, possesses a growing brewery that turns out quite creditable beer. A great scheme is in course of preparation to connect the whole of Montenegro by roads. Thus Nikšić and Kalošin are to be connected, but what is still more important, Nikšić and Gacko, the frontier town in Herzegovina and the one we had passed through on our journey from Mostar to Ragusa. King Nikolas knows what immense benefits good means of communication bring and how quickly civilisation follows a beaten track, and he is only waiting for the necessary money in order to carry out his plans. Thus, even in the wilderness, we find the strong hand that is guiding Montenegro and bringing her peace and prosperity as surely as the years pass.

A few miles and we are across the plain, climbing the five hundred feet into the great desert of rocks ; yet ere we plunge into this solitude we pause to take a last view of the northern capital. The sun is blazing down full upon the immense plain, surrounded by the remorseless

Karst, and lighting up the white church—starvation upon the mountains, plenty in the plain. When Nikšić was held by the Turk this was the frontier of Montenegro. Well can we realise the terrible tale of starvation and suffering that occasioned the raising of the siege by the Montenegrans among the mountains, till desperation forced them to risk all in one great dash and, led by their Prince, hurl themselves at the frowning walls and wrest them from an enemy as fierce fighters as themselves. One could moralise all the day long upon the countless memories that enhance this spot. We felt like bidding good-bye to an old friend as a turn in the road hid hospitable little Nikšić from our sight.

A MONTENEGRAN. NIKŠIĆ

CHAPTER XIV

BENEATH THE SHADOW OF ALBANIA

PODGORICA—DAZZLING MARKET—STRUGGLE WITH THE CROWD—OUR MAGIC PASS—IN TOUCH WITH ALBANIA—BRILLIANT SCENES—LEAVE FOR KOLAŠIN—PRELIMINARY ADVENTURES—FINAL START—INTO THE MOUNTAINS—COMMENCE TO CLIMB—SEARCH FOR WATER—OUR MEETING WITH THE OLD "POP" AND HIS FLOCK—INTO THE UNKNOWN—EXECRABLE CONDITION OF ROAD—DECIDE TO TURN, BUT CANNOT—SUMMIT AT LAST—RETURN—FIRST SERIOUS ADVENTURE—MERCÉDÈS EN PANNE—DARKNESS COMES ON—WILD DRIVE ALONG THE ALBANIAN FRONTIER—GLAD TO REACH PODGORICA SAFELY.

WE are passing, it is true, through the scenes of yesterday, yet we cannot trace a single familiar object. Yesterday we were hurried; everything was so novel and strange that we had had no time to realise the true character of the land. To-day we can study it, and what a study it is! The first impression is an almost insane longing to get through it as quickly as possible, a weird, unaccountable fear of something going wrong and being left stranded among the ghost rocks. Seldom it is that one can find a country that gives one such an idea of absolute savagery and desolation, of cruelty and oppression; it seems strange to speak in these terms of a landscape, but there is no other way to adequately describe the sensations which this appalling region inspires.

Instinctively our imagination strays to the gloom of the Middle Ages, the more so since, even down to the appearance of the people, nothing has changed since then. Imagine a world without a drop of water or a blade of green grass. Great mountains are no longer a source of relief to the eyes, but only add, by their grey coldness, an unbearable monotony. Not a drop of clean fresh water, not a brook or mountain stream—everything dried up, parched, arid and withered. To us, living in a land of green trees and fertile fields, there is something so unsurpassingly majestic, so absolutely immense as to be almost overpowering. And yet among this desolation human beings exist. Here and there, hidden cunningly among the grey rocks, a few huts cluster together around some precious well, as though for safety. It is a hard life that Montenegro has led for centuries, for it is only lately that she has been able to enjoy the fertile plains. Thirty years ago any moment might bring a great army to trample down the crops and hunt the people among the Karst. So that the Montenegran has been from earliest history a child of the same Karst. Where a stranger would have starved a Montenegran found sustenance ; the grey expanse whispered of its secret springs into her children's ears, so that this small band of fugitives might hold aloft the Cross and grow into a nation, till that great day dawned when the vast plains, that lay wasted and spoilt under the conqueror's hand, should be given to those children of the Karst, who had fought and bled so long for freedom.

Tennyson's words ring in our ears :—

> "O smallest among peoples ! rough rock-throne
> Of Freedom ! warriors beating back the swarm
> Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
> Great Crnagora ! never since thine own
> Black ridges drew the cloud and broke the storm
> Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers."

THE MONTENEGRAN PEASANT IS INSTINCTIVELY A SOLDIER. (NIKŠIĆ)

It was not until we were descending the great road to the plain of Zeta that we commenced to breathe freely, when, far below, we could see the waving corn and green trees that present to the stranger something of the same effect as the sight of water and food to a starved traveller. Back down the long road, in full view of famous old Ostrog with its stirring memories that pull so strongly at the heart-strings of every Montenegran. One wonders what thoughts surge through the mind of King Nikolas as he is borne swiftly up this road in his auto, and, gaining the summit, gazes down upon the old castle of Nikšić. What memories of the old days when, sword in hand, he called for volunteers to storm those same old walls and wrest them from the grip of the Turk !

Once more we are upon the fertile plain and have left the cold embrace of the Karst. We hummed along that wonderful and bumpy road, causing no little stir among both people and animals. Though the mules and cattle caused us much trouble, we felt sorrier for their still more terrified owners. It was practically an impossibility to get anything with four legs to pass the car. If the owner had not the sense to lead it far from the road the sagacious animal would bolt of its own accord, carrying with it any load it happened to have, together with its shrilly-protesting owner, through ditches and over sharp rocks. Often we met a Montenegran and his wife returning from some local market. The lady would be walking in front, carrying a huge bundle upon her head and leading a mule by the bridle. Seated upon the mule would be her lord and master, holding up an open parasol and encouraging her to fresh efforts with gentle words.

Perhaps the most ridiculous thing we witnessed—both the ladies seized the opportunity to point out to Ken and me the utter stupidity of the male sex in general—was the sight of two tall, dignified warriors in full war-

paint, with revolvers in their belts, endeavouring to drive three baby pigs along the road. They used their rifle barrels to guide the wayward animals, and upon our approach there followed such a squealing and squalling that we at first imagined all three animals were being summarily butchered: it was only the well-meant efforts of the two chieftains to prevent the three piglets from disappearing to the uttermost ends of the earth and to keep them together by sitting on them, if needs be, until we had disappeared.

Passing through the ruins of ancient Dioclea, we reached the ages-old river with its swirling eddies; crossing the stately old bridge, a few miles of flat road brings us to Podgorica, the largest town (I nearly said village, till I remember where we are) and the great commercial centre of Montenegro, lying as it does within half an hour's walk of the Albanian frontier. If we had been disappointed in the market of Nikšić, Fate very kindly more than compensated us in that of Podgorica. Before we realised it, we were in the centre of the great square. Never before have I seen such a sight as was presented to our astonished eyes. Albanians galore, in their tight white trousers slashed with black, vests and white linen head-dresses; Turks in quantities, and such Turks, with shaven heads and huge, blue-tasselled fezzes that hung down upon their shoulders; crowds of gay Montenegrans. And the babel and noise! Surely, mortal eyes never looked upon such a collection of picturesque and savage figures before.

It was so sudden that for a moment neither the crowd nor ourselves quite realised the position; then, with a roar, the maze of flashing colour broke up before us and came helter-skelter to inspect the novelty. Great heavens! we were the novelty. I am certain that in Podgorica we quite outshone anything in the amusement line that has ever visited the city. A circus

OLD PODGORICA STANDS ROTTING IN THE SUNSHINE. (MONTENEGRO)

would not have been in it with us; even a free circus could not have held its own for five minutes beside our attractions. The crowd of medieval figures literally threw themselves at us, and for a few moments I thought we should have been plucked from our seats. Then, as we learnt afterwards, the police had been warned of our coming, and almost as soon as the crowd surged round us four armed soldiers, under a sergeant, fought their way to our assistance. It was high time they came, and we were exceedingly glad of their help. The four men dodged round Mercédès, driving off the crowd, yet having all their work cut out, while the sergeant, saluting, said something in Serbish that I could not catch. I let him read our permit, which stiffened him up like a piece of whalebone, and he shouted out fresh orders that made his men doubly active. "To the hotel!" I roared in the sergeant's ear, for we would go no further to-day, and instead of sleeping at Kolašin, as we had intended, we determined to stay here. The sergeant I put in Rodgers' place, who stood upon the step, and at a word the four policemen cleared a lane through the crowd. Across that market we went, causing no end of trouble and disturbance, the sergeant keeping the horn going in a way that would have stirred up much strife at home, the four policemen trotting at the side of the car, calling out imperative orders.

The hotel was, if anything, smaller than the one at Nikšić, but decidedly cleaner; and our rooms were remarkably good, though to reach the first and only landing it was necessary to go into the back yard and mount by the aid of a set of stone stairs. I may be wrong, but I firmly believe that we brought the majority of that market with us to the hotel. The proprietor, filled with importance at the honour done to his abode, certainly did all in his power to make us as comfortable as possible.

Where to put Mercédès seemed at first rather a serious question, for the hotel possessed no accommodation. Then the proprietor, who was quite a bright specimen by the way, after he had got over his first embarrassment, proposed that we should use the new motor-bus garage which had been erected a short distance away. Again we learnt the difference between this hospitable land and the ordinary motor-indifferent countries we were used to. I hesitated upon approaching the motor-bus garage, but found myself much too modest, for it seems that our special permit opened all doors in Montenegro, and that we actually had a positive right to the Government motor-house. The garage was, in its own way, a kind of holy mystery to the folk of Podgorica, and the fact that it was run entirely by Bohemians added to its exclusiveness. Escorted by an ever-growing army of willing guides presided over by the sergeant, who evidently looked upon us as his own especial property, we ambled down to the garage. The doors were opened, we went in in fine style, and the doors were shut in the face of the multitude, much to their disappointment, and quiet reigned once more. It was positively uncanny to look round that garage, with its familiar accompaniment —its bench, oil cans and pit. It too was a stranger in a strange land, and the Bohemian who attended to it took Rodgers, figuratively speaking of course, to his heart as a long-absent brother. I must say we certainly received a welcome at that lonely little garage, a welcome to warm a motorist's heart, and in the light of our future and immediate adventures a perfect godsend. But I anticipate.

Ah! that market of Podgorica, how wonderful is the impression it leaves upon the mind. And yet an impression that is blurred, to a certain extent, by the thousand and one different and no less wondrous tableaux that are for ever forming themselves before the eyes—of wild

TWO OF OUR ESCORT. PODGORICA. (MONTENEGRO)

Albanians in tight white trousers and vest, their waists encircled by a belt of heavy cartridges, speaking eloquently of the revolver and rifle left upon the frontier, standing over their produce and chatting with the armed Montenegrans, arguing with the very men whom but a few miles away they would put a bullet through could they get within range of them; for, know you, we are actually upon "the borderland," where passions run riot and a bullet is the common way of settling differences!

> "Souls made of fire, and children of the Sun,
> With whom revenge is virtue."

Know that Podgorica is by common consent neutral ground. Blood-feuds are common, and enemies incited by hatred and religious difference will meet and converse in this same market-place. I should like to quote a few words from Mr. R. Wyon, who, speaking of this same spot, says: "Half an hour from the outskirts of the town these men will meet and shoot and kill; for murder or sudden death, to use their euphemistic way of looking at matters, is by no means uncommon. There is a great tract of land an hour's ride from Podgorica characteristically called the 'Crna Zemlja' or Black Earth. It is neutral, lying between Montenegro and Albania, and the man who sets foot upon it carries his life in his hands. Men who know say that every inch is soaked in blood. It is overlooked by some small hills from Albania and is covered with long pampas grass, affording good cover for a man, and they shoot there for the love of killing."

I quote this only to show the state of things that really exists, for the casual visitor to Montenegro leaves the country firmly convinced that there is no special danger and that things are as well-ordered and safe as they are at home. Think, then, what manner of men these are whom we now witness bargaining their wares in the market-place, add to them all the gorgeousness of Monte-

negran life and in addition the wonderful picturesqueness of the Moslem, for Podgorica was originally Turkish, and to-day the town across the river is wholly Moslem, with its white mosques. All the Turkish life we saw in Bosnia, and more, is in full swing. Pretty little Turkish maidens, with flowing trousers and picturesque shawls, flit hither and thither. But the Turks themselves, how wild and ferocious they look, with their white and coloured clothes, their shaven heads with one tuft of long hair left; their red turbans with enormous blue tassels, two feet long and weighing several pounds, that hang down far below the shoulders; shrieking gipsies, with coal-black hair and flashing eyes, their restless hands for ever playing with the handle of the knife in their belts; that accompaniment of every Turkish scene, unkempt madmen rushing amidst the crowd; and here and there cripples exposing to view some terrible deformity, all the while the air is filled with a shrill, never-ceasing babel of noise! Disputants angrily shout at each other; here an Albanian, losing his temper, feels impotently for his absent revolver and breathes forth threats of a future meeting that one would be amused at were they not given in deadly earnest and likely to be carried out to the bitter end.

Throughout the seething, shouting mass stride the tall red and blue figures of the Montenegran policemen, armed, according to custom, only with a revolver. Good men are these, used to acting where passion runs riot and cost is never reckoned; where life is held a little thing; where lifelong enemies meet face to face and where the participants of vendetta rub shoulders. Good men, indeed, these Montenegran guards, unobtrusive, yet ready to face any emergency and to kill, if needs must. Few people, indeed, can realise how different is the life spent upon this borderland; one walks through the market-place and marvels at the strange scene. Again

ALBANIANS ARE FORCED TO RELINQUISH THEIR GUNS AND REVOLVERS AT THE FRONTIER, AND TO ENTER MONTENEGRO UNARMED. (PODGORICA)

and again some brilliant group of colour attracts the eye only to break up and re-form itself still more wonderfully. Thousands of stalls whereon fruit almost tropical can be bought for the most paltry prices : melons, Zuccar and Turkestan melons, so sweet and delicious, were selling at a penny apiece ; peaches, plums, and, best of all, strange-shaped luscious grapes, with fruit as long and thick as the little finger, sold at less than a halfpenny a pound ! How an artist would revel in the wealth of colour ! Each time I snapped a group I felt sadder ; cold black and white. Where, oh where is the gorgeous blue, the green, yellow and blood-red scarlets, the cloudless sky, the brown-purple hills of near Albania ? if only I could reproduce it all as it lingers in my heart ! What glorious memories are stowed far away at the back of our minds. If only I could bring it half as vividly before your eyes ! If, if, if ! That was my cry as we wandered, charmed beyond measure, through the throng.

Podgorica itself is full of interest, consisting of two distinct towns divided by a small river, the Ribnica. Before its conquest by Montenegro, in 1877, Podgorica consisted only of the old Turkish town that stands intact to-day, a heavily walled place that for some time defied every effort of the Christian to capture. After its fall a new town commenced to rise upon the opposite bank, and the market was transferred thither. To-day the old Moslem citadel stands alone, its walls crumbling year by year, its streets precipitous and brutally paved. Utter ruin is written upon every moss-covered stone. Pathetic stories of decay and desolation, each ruined house seems to murmur. True, both white mosques rear their slender minarets, calling the Faithful to prayer, but the warlike power of the Turk has vanished ; it is a thing of the past. Yet, though they live amidst decay and desolation, stripped of their war-power, the Turk still wields enormous influence in Podgorica. No Jew is

keener at a business transaction ; no man more honest and straightforward in keeping to an agreement. Where the victorious Montenegran fails so hopelessly the Turk excels, and with the Albanian actually controls and holds in the palm of his hand the whole business of commercial Podgorica. The Montenegran may spend his life parading the street, sitting at one or other of the innumerable little cafés and discussing men and matters as the lord of creation ; but out of sight, in the undercurrent, the unobtrusive Turk and the fierce Albanian laugh up their sleeve at him, and together mock his stupidity and business weaknesses, at the same time dividing the accompanying prosperity of cosmopolitan Podgorica. King Nikolas encourages the Turk just as he encourages anyone who will foster trade and thus bring money to his land. He welcomes political refugees from any country, provided they are willing to serve him honourably, and many Turks and Albanians become loyal subjects. Should a man having a blood-feud fly over the border to Montenegro, the King will, if he become a subject and marry, give him a small tract of land near the frontier, where he may build his house, thus forming a doubly watchful guard to Montenegro.

Until dusk we wandered among the strange folk and through the Turkish town. All Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot show such Moslem life as we witnessed here, the veiled women being specially gorgeous, with trousers of perfectly alarming bagginess and dazzling colours ; fearful of being seen, they hurry along in the shadow of the mean houses to draw water at the numerous fountains. It is strange how, to a certain extent, the Montenegran follows the example of the Turk. A Scotsman who has settled in the land told us that it is seldom that the lower-class Montenegran sees his future wife before marriage ; that men of Podgorica marry girls from Nikšić or Kolašin, never having

looked upon their faces, and at ridiculously early ages. His foreman, a middle-aged Turk, had just espoused a thirteen-year-old bride. It is very strange, for the Montenegran is a Christian, and one would naturally imagine he would take a certain pleasure in the society of a wife. The Turk shuts his wife up immediately upon marriage, keeping her from all contact with the world, and few indeed are the men that look upon her face again, while the Montenegran, upon the other hand, regards his better half (?) merely as an extra beast of burden and one of nature's natural means of relieving him of the harder toils of existence. To our ideas this is horrible, but their fathers did it before them and their children will, in all probability, follow the same tradition. As in every Eastern land, the females know no girlhood and are old women long before a woman in our country has reached her prime. Women of twenty-five and thirty are old, and what makes it still more sad is that age, in the female sex, does not command respect, and is made the excuse for still heavier drudgery. How well off we are in England, only those who travel can ever realise. Like the stay-at-home Englishman who, upon returning from a long tour, was asked by his wife what had made him so patriotic about his own country so suddenly, and replied, " Other countries."

It will be remembered that the road to Nikšić runs inland, so that it soon loses sight of the Albanian frontier. Kolašin lies much nearer the frontier and about forty miles from Podgorica; it is a small town that has been practically isolated from the rest of Montenegro on account of the difficulties of access, for a great range of arid mountains forms a formidable barrier, until recently only traversed by a tiring and exhausting mule-track. It is to Kolašin that the new road has been made, of which Mr. Ramadamovitch was so proud, saying that the Crown Prince had opened it a month before and that

he had made the journey. Nothing was said of the three weeks' continuous rain that had fallen since, and the state that the new road was likely to be in; on the contrary, our day's excursion to Kolašin was made to appear as a bed of roses, a quiet and lovely drive over a wonderful—oh, how wonderful!—road, through "the garden of Montenegro." In happy ignorance of the true state of affairs and what lay in store for us upon the morrow, we retired to our rooms, by the outside stone staircase, to enjoy a well-earned night's repose, and to dream of the novel scenes we had witnessed in that gay market-place upon the borderland of Albania.

As Kolašin lay only thirty-five miles away at the furthest, we decided to return to Podgorica the same day, and so did not hurry next morning, but after a comfortable breakfast brought Mercédès to the door and, assisted by a well-meaning if rather embarrassing crowd, took our places. By this time we were becoming used to these attentions, and indeed felt lonely if less than fifty people did not congregate to witness our departure.

We had made several friends during the night, and these, helped by the landlord and the willing crowd, cheered merrily as we left the door. In order that there should be no mistake, and as the road was said to be rather difficult to find, a policeman took his place on the step to come with us as far as the outskirts. I give that policeman every credit for acting up to his abilities and blame them alone for what eventually happened. After twice apparently completely circling the town, much to the delight of the inhabitants, our guide selected a road leading out of the market-place, and with a wave of his hand intimated that our way lay straight ahead. Standing stiffly at the salute, he acknowledged our thanks, and we sped down the road, our hearts warmed by this extra kindness. At the end of the street we came to a sharp right-angle bend; to go straight on would mean

passing over a flat grassy space, apparently the commencement of a large grazing-ground, stretching to the base of the mountains ; we naturally followed the road. Presently we came to a bridge, and crossing over it found ourselves in the Turkish town. Looking across the river we were surprised to see our hotel just on the other bank and the crowd of red and blue folk still collected before it. They set up a shouting and waved their arms frantically upon seeing us, and in splendid ignorance of the fact that they were doing all in their power to stop us, we waved them an airy salute, and again commented upon the astonishing warmness of our send-off.

Our road passes the two white-domed mosques and very soon leaves the crumbling ruins far behind. We are now upon a splendid broad road, passing over an immense flat plain, where flocks of sheep and herds of goats graze peacefully. Now and then we pass large flocks with their attendant herdsmen, clothed in enormous sheepskin cloaks which reach down to the knees and are covered with long, matted hair, giving them the appearance of ancient Britons, their weather-beaten faces lending the last touch to their wild appearance.

The road, broad and good at first, soon degenerates, and is covered with great ruts and high caked banks of dried mud. The first thing that sent a strange misgiving through our minds was the fact that the sun shone upon our left, if anything, in our faces. This meant we were travelling almost due south, the wrong direction, for Kolašin lay north of Podgorica ; also we were running parallel to the line of naked hills, which was manifestly wrong ; while, instead of the great range of mountains we had expected, the road was flat as the paper I write upon. Presently we came up to the local four-horsed diligence, which promptly drew off the road and shed every occupant. With bared heads the passengers saluted us as we passed, and we continued to bump along,

still arguing among ourselves whether or not we were upon the right road. We kept upon our uneasy path for nearly an hour, and must have covered some eighteen miles in spite of the awful surface, when we came to a little cluster of tiny houses, and passing a wayside inn found ourselves in a large farmyard, and before we could pull up upon the slippery surface, almost in a sluggish river that formed the end of the yard. Astounded beyond measure, we looked about for a sign of the continuation of the road. None was visible, and still discussing the apparent phenomenon we backed Mercédès to the café. A red-coated sergeant appeared and saluted stiffly.

"To Kolašin?" I asked, pointing to the farmyard.

"Kolašin, Kolašin!" he repeated, his face as vacant as a piece of wood. Several other red-coated individuals joined him, and I produced our sketch map and pointed out the place. Instantly the sun-baked faces lighted up with radiant smiles and many sets of perfect teeth were unveiled for our inspection. Pointing back the way we had come the sergeant broke into guttural Serbish.

"Where *are* we?" Sheila asked, addressing herself to the world in general.

I again showed the map and our friend soon pointed to Plavnica, the spot where the steamer to Skutari calls, within a short distance of the lake, and best of all, directly south of Podgorica. We should have to return thither and recommence our journey. There was nothing for it but to take the thing in good part, and as the humour of the situation slowly overcame our annoyance we too broke into smiles, especially when we thought of the crowd before the hotel door and the prize idiots we had made of ourselves. Bidding good-bye to our friends of the inn, we turned Mercédès in the farmyard, nearly skidding into the river in doing so, and bumped back along the horrible road, meeting the diligence and again causing

UPON THE ALBANIAN FRONTIER

its occupants to dismount with much haste and hang on to the horses' heads.

At Podgorica our appearance had evidently been keenly expected, for we were welcomed back to the capital by a happy and hilarious crowd. Under personal supervision we were conducted to the right-angle turn by the grassy bank and shown that our way lay actually across the stretch of grass. First I went to inspect what lay ahead, and found that some three hundred yards across the green there commenced another road, which looked quite good and which, for some unaccountable reason, ended in the common. Assured by a hundred tongues that *this*, and this only, was the road, we easily passed over the grass and regained the made surface.

Without previous information it would be quite impossible to know that there existed a road over that stretch of grass, for there were no wheel-marks, and of course sign-posts are quite unknown in Montenegro, for as one native in Cetinje proudly told me, " There is only one road to any town, and therefore it is quite impossible to go wrong." I was enabled to put him right upon that point later, much to my satisfaction, and point out to him that, though there was only one road, like the old song, " it's all right when you know it, but you've got to know it first."

It was nearer twelve o'clock than eleven when we finally commenced the journey to Kolašin, so that some sixty or seventy miles lay before us. It sounds ridiculous, I know, to talk of that distance to the ordinary motorist ; but one must remember that we were under abnormal conditions, and that though one may make good travelling for a few miles, the next half-dozen may take as many hours to accomplish. I wonder if there exists another road in the Balkans like the one to Kolašin ? I am perfectly willing to accept, with a pinch of salt, the official explanation of the three weeks' rain and to make allow-

ance for the difficulties that the constructors had to face, and its recent completion (?). The thing started well, indeed, we rejoiced greatly at its appearance ; running some few miles straight into the towering hills, it was good and sound and gave much promise. Reaching the base of the grey range, which is here split open by a tumbling stream, so that it appears as though this dark cleft is really the mouth of the hills, the road clings to the right bank, and just as it passes out of view of the flat plain, crosses the stream. It is here that we are nearest to the wild Albanian frontier, and indeed this spot is exceptionally well suited to the sinister history that it possesses. Many men have passed over here, intent on killing for the very lust of slaughter, others actuated by the calls of blood-feuds, but one and all relentless in their determination to kill or be killed. How many have returned, some victorious, bringing with them the " noses" of their enemies, as is the pleasing custom still in force ; but how many have returned scattered fugitives, fleeing for their lives, pursued by remorseless foes to the frontier, and then followed by a stray and perhaps fatal bullet !

" Land of Albania ! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men ! "

All that one reads of this strange life, so full of primitive hates and passions, so different from our own, seems to be embodied in the scenery we are passing through ; on either side of the now rushing waters the mountains of jagged rock rise up and overhang. It is only by cutting the road out of the living rock itself, high above, to be out of reach of the angry waters, that a way can be found through this " devil's land." The scene is wild and savage in the extreme, and the grey towering rocks seem to the eye to take to themselves every imaginable fantastic shape—castles with turrets and bastions, walled keeps with ruined shadowy gateways ; here and there some rugged outline takes upon itself the shape of

MANY MEN PASS BY HERE INTENT ON KILLING. (MONTENEGRAN ALBANIAN FRONTIER)

a giant's head or the weird contour of a hunchback. Look where you will it seems as though the demons of the hills are watching, calculating to crush you as you pass under these overhanging rocks that only retain their perilous footing upon the precipice edge by a miracle and need but the touch of a mountain-elf's hand to send them crashing down, carrying with them destruction and sweeping the frail road into the surging waters beneath.

Our way now commences to rise, and, though we knew it not, we were to spend the next four hours endeavouring to attain the summit of this phenomenal climb. Not content with following up the fall of the stream, the road rises steeply up the side of the gorge, which expands into a great cañon. The road is cut in a steep slant, now and then lapping back upon itself, but ever penetrating farther and farther into the heart of the mountains. At last we reach the summit of the great hills that form the sides of the wide ravine and find ourselves faced by another range of mountains. Here and there are still the signs of the Southern clime: gardens filled with sweet-smelling flowers and luscious fruits, tiny vineyards sur rounding some poor stone house, and they themselves surrounded by the fast-enveloping Karst—little oases in a desert of grey rock. The higher we climb the fewer become these spots of green. The road is splendidly engineered and has at the commencement a very fine surface, but hardly had we rounded half a dozen of the acute zigzags than a change became noticeable, a decided change for the worse. First the road surface is loose in patches, and gradually these patches become more frequent. We were mounting upon the second, and at a fair speed, but as we struck one of these loose zones the wheels were clogged and brought us instantly down to the first. However, there was nothing insurmountable, and we continued to climb at alternate speeds.

Amidst a last little clump of trees we perceived two small stone houses, and stopped to obtain some fresh water for the radiator, as a fairly long stretch of loose sand and mud had brought us almost to a standstill and the water to a boil. We halted Mercédès under the largest tree, out of the sunshine, which was almost unbearable, and instantly a large assembly of rough-looking men and women poured through one of the narrow doorways. They were dressed in the native costumes, but were quite a different class to those of the plains, used from their infancy to face the dangers and hardships of the bleak Karst ; for this little settlement was, in fact, upon the very border of the upper ranges, which are composed entirely of naked rock, and which, from this point, reach heavenward as far as the eye can see, blasted with utter barrenness. These folk were Nature's children, as their hard, coarse features and scorched faces proclaimed. Yet, for all their uncouth appearance, they were wonderfully well behaved and gathered round us with the surprised pleasure of children who have discovered a new toy. I had hard work to explain what we wanted, but at last one man took the jug and returned with it half filled with water.

At that moment two men of better appearance came out of one of the houses, accompanied by an old Greek priest with flowing white beard and long silvery hair, dressed in the sweeping black robes of his calling. He had on a round Montenegran cap, in place of the ugly black one usually worn, for the priests are patriotic to a degree and themselves warriors, invariably carrying a revolver beneath their cassock. From the respect with which the old priest was treated, I felt that this was the man to get us the water. He came up to me at once with a smiling face and guttural blessing. As he could speak nothing but Serbish, we were forced to fall back upon the oldest of all languages and, by help of signs,

THE WILDEST DRIVE IN THE BALKANS. UPON THE ALBANIAN MONTENEGRAN FRONTIER

try to understand one another. In this way I made him comprehend what we needed and showed him an empty four-gallon petrol tin to be filled. Water in this land is more precious than wine, and both houses could only muster about half a gallon.

It was impossible to proceed without a good supply, for we knew now what lay before us, and that from the look of the desolate mountains up which the road, a tiny white scratch, climbed none was to be depended upon there. The old priest pointed far down the rock-strewn slope, to make us understand where lay the nearest well, and as a last resource I let him read our "permit." Again this proved the Open Sesame, the very key to the solution of our trouble. What that "permit" said I never knew; it was written in the terrible Russian characters, but it had a wonderful effect upon our fortunes. The old priest stiffened, as did the sergeant of police at Podgorica, and in a trice one of the big-boned brigands had taken the empty petrol can and disappeared at a run among the rocks. A man appeared with glasses and a bottle of horrible white brandy, and we were forced to swallow a mouthful each; it burnt the throat terribly and set us coughing. Instantly I pressed some upon our clerical friend, and then insisted on the host serving every man and woman of the crowd. We always carried boxes of excellent Montenegran cigarettes, and opening a couple I passed them round.

In less than a minute we had reached the hearts of these warm-hearted folk and the dark faces had broken into smiles. The old priest, or "Pop" as he is here called, proved himself a jovial soul and harangued the crowd with much vivacity, evidently endeavouring to show us honour. He was a most picturesque figure, with his white locks hanging down to his shoulders, his long beard and sparkling eyes. I produced my kodak, and having explained, as far as possible, its meaning, and convinced

the crowd that it was perfectly harmless, the " Pop " stood to be photographed, one of the men standing beside him on his guard, his hand resting upon the butt of his revolver.

The way that fiery liquid disappeared down the throats of the community was a sight worth coming far to see, and I ordered a further supply all round ; more cigarettes followed, while the picturesque old " Pop " and I carried on a delightful if somewhat " Jack Sprat " kind of conversation. We had emptied that bottle of white brandy and finished two twenty-five boxes of cigarettes when the man returned, panting, with the water. He was treated to a well-earned drink and smoke, and I slipped a new Montenegran two-kronen piece into his hand. The children of the Black Mountain will never attain the steps of the minuet or the Pavanne, but the recipient of the silver coin essayed a few clumsy paces ere he retired into the crowd drunk with fortune. I made the " host," he who owned the now empty bottle of " Schnapps," an ample present, and he too was delighted far beyond its value.

I photographed the crowd, much to their joy, and we all shook hands with the " Pop." Pointing up the road I said, " Kolašin " ; nods and smiles replied, and we were ready to proceed. A perfect roar—it could hardly be called a cheer—came from our friends as we started, and even as we crawled high up on the hill-side and looked far beneath us, we could see a confused blur of red and blue at the cottage door, and through our glasses we found that every face was watching our progress. Arms were waved until we climbed out of view, and we had had another taste of the wondrous hospitality and goodwill of the dwellers in these inhospitable mountains.

We had come from Podgorica prepared, as we had been told, to see " the garden of Montenegro," and had been awaiting its appearance ever since we commenced to

THE OLD 'POP' AND HIS HARDY FLOCK VIEWING AN AUTO FOR THE FIRST TIME.
(ALBANIAN MONTENEGRAN FRONTIER)

climb. Instead of that, the scenery became barer and barer, till now it appeared to have reached the very acme of bleakness; it was a landscape that one might see in a nightmare, a hideous land, scorched by the sun, swept by intolerable storms, the home of the tempest king, the birthplace of Shelley's "old earthquake demon."

Time after time we seemed to have reached the summit only to find that a further range of low hills lay before us; our road creeping over them, hidden now and then as it wound among the pitiless rocks. It was afternoon when we halted for lunch. There was no shelter of any kind, and the sun blazed down upon us with intolerable power, even the ground itself was warm, and the rocks so hot that we could scarce touch them with our hands. The road had steadily deteriorated, though its general construction was good, and we marvelled at the pluck and perseverance of those who had planned and constructed a road through such a region. Yet the surface was appalling. After leaving our lately made friends it had steadily gone from bad to worse. I wonder how I had best describe it. To begin with, there was no hardness whatever: a mixture of clay and sand had been soddened by weeks of rain and was just hardening; it had reached that stage when it will not allow the wheels to pass through easily, yet it was not so hard that the wheels might crush the furrows to powder. It was, in fact, just in that abominable stage when it clings to the wheels with loving tenacity, clogging them with the grip of quicksand and bringing the car to a standstill unless the engine is accelerated.

Never could one imagine a more terrible surface, and perhaps the thing that speaks most for it is the fact that on our descent of this selfsame mountain, when the gradients were often as much as one in eight, I had actually to use the power to urge the car down-hill, so tenacious was the grip of the treacherous road. Think,

then, what this means, when the same heavy gradient has to be ascended! It means opening the throttle wide upon the first speed, a thing that would, under normal conditions, rattle the engine to pieces, but now is only just sufficient to pull the reluctant wheels through the ploughed surface. Many times it was a question of luck, a kind of metaphorical toss of Fate, whether or not we should stick, but each time, after holding our breath for many anxious seconds, Mercédès, fighting as for very life, succeeded in getting through. Can one wonder that the water in the radiator boiled? The wind, if any, blew in the same direction as ourselves, while the sun burnt down with merciless force. Boil, it did boil, for I had the accelerator hard down and then we only made about eight miles an hour.

It was after a particularly hard fight with a long stretch, more resembling a ploughed field than a road, and at a fairly acute angle, that we stopped for lunch, and at the same time to save our spare water by allowing the engine to cool. Though we had reached a comparatively hard portion of the road, our boots sank into the soft ground. As far as we could see the road appeared the same, ever winding upwards to the summit of a range of low hills. We had capped quite half a dozen of these deceptive summits and still another appeared before us.

What a God-forsaken landscape stretched itself about us as we discussed our lunch! A desert of rocks, from whose grey surface the light was reflected till we were compelled to half close our eyes, so intense was the glare. It was exceedingly lucky I had laid in a good supply of provisions at Cattaro, and never for an instant were we short. At Nikšić white bread was unknown, likewise butter, which, strange to say, though used for cooking, is rarely, if ever, seen upon the table. In sealed tins butter and the delicious round Viennese "semille" cobs remained good for over a week, so that with our tinned

OUR FRIEND IN NEED THE OLD 'POP.' (NOTE THE MAN WHO CONSTITUTED HIMSELF THE OLD MAN'S GUARD, AND WHO KEPT HIS HAND UPON HIS REVOLVER WHILE FACING THE KODAK)

meats, cold boiled ham, bovril and unlimited fruits we were always able to feast royally. It was also lucky, as it happened, that we enjoyed such an excellent lunch upon this occasion—but I must not anticipate.

Rodgers was packing up the things preparatory to starting when far below down the steep grey slope we perceived three brilliant-coloured figures on horseback picking their way among the rocks and climbing steeply by aid of a mule-path. They reached us in time, and to our surprise we saw that the foremost was the old "Pop" whom we had left with his flock far below. He had taken off his black cassock, which lay across the pommel of the saddle, and was attired like his two companions, in dark blue, baggy pants, ending in top-boots, and brilliant red-sleeved jacket, and sporting a heavy revolver in his sash. With his white hair and beard he half reminded one of Garibaldi, the short red jacket adding to this idea. He dismounted at once and shook hands. We opened a fresh bottle of Médoc from the Grand Hotel at Cetinje, which made his eyes sparkle. I pointed to the awful state of the road.

"*Dobro*" ("Good"), smiled the old "Pop."

"*Dobro!*" I repeated in a surprised voice, and shook my head.

He broke into a long guttural sentence in which *dobro* shared a large part, and ended by taking me to the rock-strewn "cat-walk" up which he had come, and then back to our road, which he tapped with his booted foot and again repeated "*Dobro.*"

"Don't you see," cried Sheila, her sweet eyes lighting up as she grasped his meaning, "don't you see he means this awful road is *dobro*, vastly superior to the old path, and that as long as he can remember no wheeled vehicle could pass over these hills, while now they are actually able to do so?" The old "Pop" watched our faces intently, and seeing their expressions, nodded, smiled, and,

after shaking hands, he and his two companions again entered among the rocks, remaining a moving patch of colour upon a colourless background, until the grey waste swallowed them from view and distance clothed their bright hues with an all-enshrouding mantle of grey.

I will not weary you with all the harrowing details of that climb ; time after time we abandoned hope of ever ultimately reaching the actual summit—nothing but low grey hills, a stricken world of steel-like mounds, each higher than its neighbour, yet each in turn capped by one still greater. To add to our troubles, the road turned positively dangerous, its edges were hardly safe, and many times we had moments that are not good to think of. At its best it tried all the capacity of Mercédès, at its worst it was a nightmare of the most awful horrors, and one that I do not intend to dwell upon.

Once or twice when I tried to rush Mercédès through a particularly soft portion of road she skidded so violently towards the edge that I only attempted it once. Again, the temperature was killing, and what with the heat, the glare, the anxiety of the road and the thought of what might be in pickle for us, we enjoyed an experience that I hope we may never be again called upon to face. I have seen some of the worst roads in Andalucia and Murcia, also round Valencia ; I have traversed some pretty bad ones in South Italy ; but in all my wanderings I have never come upon such a shocking example of road surface as that newly constructed road from Podgorica to Kolašin through " the garden of Montenegro."

A dozen times we had to stop to cool the radiator (a thing unknown in the Alps), and each time our stock of precious water was sadly diminished. On such occasions the old " Pop " would suddenly appear, taking shape out of the Karst, and after a few cheerful words in praise of the new road, disappear upon the other side again. And all this time the road never reached the summit. Looking

FEARFULLY WE CLIMB UPWARD, A TINY SPECK UPON THAT LANDSCAPE OF ARID MONOTONY, UPON THE ALBANIAN FRONTIER. (NOTE THE CAR AND THE ROAD)

at our barometer, we were surprised to see that we had only risen some 3500 feet, not much higher than the climb from Cattaro. Thoughts of turning back were banished the instant they came, then entertained and finally seriously discussed. It was after four o'clock, and the summit was not in sight; however, we set our teeth and at a snail's pace plodded slowly upward. I think perhaps the zigzags, for utter vileness, held the record. It seemed as though the weeks of rain had washed down a deposit of sand and mud which had accumulated at the acute bends. As it was necessary to reverse at many of them we had an opportunity of observing their condition. Many times I had visions of Mercédès sticking irrevocably in the morass, and it was ever an anxiety till we had rounded the zig and were crawling upward to the next zag. After frequent halts we finally, about five o'clock, reached the long-expected summit, which is merely a rock-strewn slope covered with stumpy green shrub. We did not know how far Kolašin lay beneath us, but as the road continued as vile as ever we unanimously decided not to attempt the descent, especially with the certainty of having to climb back. Alas for our wise resolutions! There was no possible chance of turning —the road was narrow, its edges death-traps, its surface treacherous and altogether as unpromising as could well be imagined.

There was nothing for it but to go on, for go back we could not. What a descent that was; the whole hill side lay under thick, coarse, green shrub, and here the weeks of rain had left the road in an appalling condition, sheltered as it was from the warm rays of the sun. After descending some five hundred feet we came to a clearing where the road was broader, and where we determined to try and get Mercédès round. The next ten minutes nearly turned my hair white: we backed and filled until we became jammed; on the right a wall of rock with a soft

gutter between it and the road, and on the other side a drop of some hundreds of feet. Rodgers and Ken stood by the bonnet and helped to pull the steering-wheels round, and once I backed a little too far and got both back wheels into the soft earth. Before they could sink too far I put on the power and Mercédès tore herself out, nearly overbalancing on the opposite edge. We had to abandon all idea of turning and continued the descent. Very soon we came to another clearing, and found we were well over the range of mountains, for a beautiful panorama lay beneath us.

It was the valley of Kolašin, and though here and there bare summits of Karst showed, almost the whole land lay green before our eyes, intensely restful and soothing after the incessant glare we had passed through. The valley from where we were looked sunny and green, with shady trees bordering a small stream ; far below we could see the road feeling its way gingerly and clinging to the hill-sides. How peaceful everything looked, almost like a glimpse of another land, and we wondered if this was the garden of Montenegro. Another five hundred feet and we came to a sharp right-angle turn, where, luckily, there was easy room to back Mercédès. We could see the first houses of Kolašin from here, and though it was only a mile or so away, we did not propose to go on, for the road was really unspeakably bad, night fast approaching and we had to return to Podgorica. Therefore, without reluctance, we bid a long adieu to the valley of Kolašin. Perhaps upon our next visit—for he who goes to Montenegro must return sooner or later—we shall revisit it, but not until the " new road " has ceased to be new and the King has a regular service of " buses " running.

We had a few anxious moments before we regained the summit, and when at last we commenced the final descent we felt as though a great load had been lifted from our

WE ARE GAZING UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF MACEDONIA. (KOLAŠIN, MONTENEGRO)

backs. Little dreaming that our troubles had only just commenced and that they would speedily change into adventures, we chatted cheerfully.

As I said before, we experienced the phenomenon of having to use the power to induce Mercédès to descend a one-in-eight incline, so clinging was the ground. It seemed to be interminable, that descent; turn after turn succeeded one another with monotonous regularity. Again we were amidst the stricken Karst, in utter desolation. We had just come into view of the little cottage where we had first seen the old "Pop," and which, after quitting the view on Kolašin, was the first sign of habitation to greet our eyes. Just as we were descending the last zigzag we met a carriage drawn by three good horses, and seated in it two friends, the Minister of the Interior and the Chief of Police of Podgorica. We stopped Mercédès to allow them to pass; they also stopped and descended and came over to say a few polite words. After talking for a while they shook hands and continued their lonely climb. Five minutes after bidding them good-bye we were heeled over in a ditch. I am not propounding a riddle, but stating a fact, and this is how it happened :—

Almost opposite the cottages I drew rather too near the right-hand side of the road, along which runs a deep gutter. All I remember is feeling a sudden lurch of the car, followed by a scream from the tonneau, and Mercédès heeled over to the right and stopped with a horrible jar. Rodgers, with great presence of mind, snatched at the switch, stopping all fear of an explosion from the exhaust. No one was hurt, and Ken and I leapt down to find out what had really happened. There was one portion of the long ditch that had become filled up with mud and earth till it was only about two feet deep; it was at this exact spot that the ground had given way, and the off back wheel was in the ditch. Looking to ascertain what Mercédès was resting upon, I found to my dismay that

it was apparently the petrol tank, and as though to confirm my worst suspicions an ever-enlarging circle of petrol was spreading upon the ground. We were in a pretty plight, and Mercédès had a most forlorn appearance as she lay, like a stranded ship, hard over. Had she been a few feet backwards or forwards, the ditch being some five or six feet deep, she would have capsized without doubt. As it was she was in no enviable position, especially as darkness was approaching.

The first thing to do was to get her back on the road. Our friends of the cottages poured out and several of the men pressed forward eager to help. Mercédès scales, with luggage, over three tons, so that any thought of levering her was impossible. I called for boards and planks, which, luckily, were in abundance. First we built a stone foundation in the ditch and then laid down some boards. Next came the jack from them to the outside cap of the wheel. This raised the wheel sufficient to get a board underneath. Lowering the car on to that, we built up the jack and again got a board under the wheel. It was ticklish work, but we pushed on feverishly while the light still held good, and at last had the wheel raised some ten inches. Now came the time when we must again jack her up, and pulling all the boards from under the wheel, put beneath it a big square wooden block that lay handy. What a moment that was while the car rested upon the jack, balanced on pieces of wood, and the support was taken from under the wheel, leaving a great gap. " If she slips now we shall stop here the night," came Ken's muffled voice from the ditch, and Rodgers and I, on our hands and knees, breathed up a prayer that it would hold. It did, and the wood was safely got under. More building, and at last the wheel had been jacked up another foot and stood as high as the road. Then we built a platform of planks across the ditch, and when ready lowered the wheel.

NEAR KOLOŠIN. (NOTE THE ROAD CLINGING TO THE DESOLATE KARST)

Our work was done, and the next moment Mercédès was pushed on to the road. Had she strained anything? we anxiously wondered. How lucky she had a chain-drive and not a live axle, for the other wheel while she lay in the ditch looked for the time being quite out of truth. Everything seemed all right, as far as we could see, save that the petrol tank was burst and every drop of fluid was gone. That, however, did not strand us, for among our provisions for trouble we always carry a spare two-gallon tin on the step. This was tied upon the tyre covers at the side of the car and a rubber pipe carried to the carburettor, so that the engine was fed by gravity instead of pressure.

It was as black as pitch when we had finished, and we lit our powerful head-lamps. A cry of wonder came from the crowd, and many were blinded for a time through putting their faces close up to the reflectors. We had been some two hours from the moment the accident happened and it was just eight o'clock as we prepared to proceed. A dozen of the men had been of great assistance, bringing wood and helping all they could, so selecting their leader, a man with a kind, unshaven face and a large revolver, I gave him a twenty-kronen note, to be divided among the others. Hats were doffed, and before I could escape several men had grabbed my hand and kissed it. Amidst fervent, and I am sure hearty, blessings, we said good-bye and commenced our journey to Podgorica, some 1500 feet below.

That pitch-dark drive down to the plains along the Albanian frontier is the most vivid recollection that we retain of the whole tour. What a drive that was. Our petrol tank burst, only two gallons in a frail tin left, and down that hair-raising road, within call of the dreaded frontier. In case I forget to mention it, our Scotch friend playfully told us as we left the hotel that many bears and wolves are to be found on these hills. That, I think,

completes the setting, except that since lunch we had had nothing save our fill of worries. But the drive—nothing can ever rob us of that memory! Almost as we started the rumble of thunder and the blackness was changed to day by a flash of lightning. Soon the storm passed, and only a faint rumble and distant illumination hinted at its existence. Now and then the sky in the distance would light up, silhouetting the black jagged outline of the Karst. Our wonderful head-lamps shone through the darkness, illuminating the descending road, throwing it up in brilliant contrast to the utter blackness that filled the space beyond. Once I turned a head-lamp to shine down over the road's edge: it showed nothing—nothing save impenetrable blackness. Several times we met peasants tramping up the lonely road, who must surely have taken us for spirits, for they remained standing as they were, stupefied in the circle of light, queer figures in white, their rifles slung on their backs, the gleam of a revolver in their red sashes.

Once we met two cows; one fled I know not whither, the other stood upon the precipice edge of the road quite dazed, as the head-light lit it up, and incapable of moving, its hind leg actually swinging over space. Rodgers had to jump out and shove the animal to the other side of the road, so mesmerised was it by the glare. Another time we met four horses with timber and had to blank out our lamps. It was touch and go, but we got past and thankfully continued our way to encounter fresh trouble.

At last we reached the narrow gorge that enters the plain and could hear the thunder of waters near us, but quite invisible. We are now upon the frontier, and every minute half expect to witness something in the fighting line. It would wind up our exciting day to get mixed in a border raid and be carried off into the "Prokletze," "The Damned Mountains," to await a tardy ransom. However, we were spared this and in due time

reached the plains. The moon was now shining and gave us a good light. Twice more we met parties of men, who stood like white statues till we flashed past; it was as though some of the chorus of a fantastic opera had stridden into the limelight, so suddenly did the picturesque figures appear. Rodgers mentions that he saw a mule suddenly bolt into the deep ditch which edges this road, carrying two men with it, and climbing out on the other side, make tracks for the distant hills. He did not shout at the time, as he knew we should stop.

It was good to feel grass under the wheels and know we were crossing the common, and the next moment we reached the first house. Never did a hotel look more welcome than that little one of Podgorica; we would not have gone another yard had the "Ritz" been in the next street, but drew up before its bright door with feelings easier imagined than described. Ordering the proprietor to get something ready and dropping the ladies, we took Mercédès to the garage and, leaving her there, walked back to the hotel.

A wash worked wonders, and to our surprise our host served a most excellent dinner, that we lost no time in devouring. It was only when the last morsel had disappeared and the coffee was placed upon the table that, over an excellent cigar, we began to discuss the day's adventures. A quarter of an hour later Sheila touched me on the arm, and we saw that Dorothy had fallen asleep in her seat, her head resting upon her arms on the table. That was a fair hint, and we bid each other good night, climbing up the stone stairs in the yard to our rooms, and with scarcely a remembrance of how we ever got into bed, knowing nothing till the sun, streaming into our rooms, called to our attention that another day had more than broken.

CHAPTER XV

ACROSS MONTENEGRO

REPAIRING MERCÉDÈS—AFTERNOON START FOR CETINJE — GOOD-BYE TO PODGORICA — NARROW ESCAPE — RJEKA—LONG ASCENT—SUNSET UPON THE ALBANIAN ALPS—CETINJE AGAIN—INTERVIEW NEXT MORNING—KING LEFT FOR NIKŠIĆ—FRESH PLANS—RACE TO VIR —AN UNPLEASANT INCIDENT—SUTORMANN PASS—THE BLUE ADRIA—ANTIVARI.

I AWOKE next morning with a strong distaste of the task that lay before us, that of overhauling Mercédès, with the certain knowledge that the petrol tank lay flattened, and what else we had to find out. After an early breakfast Ken and I hurried to the garage, for we must sleep in Cetinje that night, as our audience with King Nikolas had been fixed for the following morning. We found Rodgers endeavouring to get some of the mud off Mercédès, which stuck to her once white body with all the hardness of plaster-of-Paris. From her running last night I knew that nothing was wrong, as far as the engine and differential were concerned, so that our whole trouble centred upon the petrol tank. It was here that our Scotch friend came in so handy, translating freely for us, and in many ways proving himself a friend in need.

How fervently I blessed Fate for installing that garage at Podgorica, a tiny island of light in a sea of ignorance, a mystery to the good folk of the town as a pioneer of

that great civilisation of the world outside and the forerunner of a future invasion that all their war-power and skill will be powerless to resist. We backed Mercédès over the pit and commenced the examination. We had to cut away the heavy wire mat that protects the tank from stones and, this done, clean away the dirt. To our surprise we found that the tank was not split as we expected, but only that the screw-cap upon the bottom had been forced right in and cracked round the edge. The weight of the car had been taken by a strong wooden box, besides the tank used for carrying oil cans, and this had actually supported Mercédès, suffering badly in consequence and now a perfect wreck.

I do not intend to bother the reader with details of our wrestles with the tank; any practical mechanic will understand the difficulties of standing in a three-foot pit and trying to solder the bottom of the tank in its place, for we could not remove it without lifting off the canopy and tonneau. Each time we thought we had succeeded, and had put a little petrol in the tank, a pressure forced a drop through and we had to dry the tank and start over again. Suffice it to say that it took five hours and a half before the tank held solid, and with the fumes of the petrol we had had enough. Gathering everything together we bid a last good-bye to that heaven-sent little garage, and with Mercédès reached the hotel for lunch just as the clock pointed to three o'clock.

It was four o'clock when we finally said farewell to that excellent, if tiny, hotel, where we had been so well received and cared for by its attentive host. We felt our hearts warm to the brightly dressed crowd of enthusiasts who, with doffed hats, gave us a magnificent send-off. But before we left the town we had to search for more petrol, as we had only a bare half-gallon left; our Scotch friend came with us to a chemist, who supplied

all he possessed—four gallons—at two kronen a litre, which is just ten shillings a gallon. However, this is by the way, and we would willingly have paid whatever had been asked. By the time the precious liquid was safely stowed in the tank—all save one gallon, that went to the spare tin upon the step—most of Podgorica had collected. Our police escort acted as guard of honour, and when we for a last time started the engine it was like parting for ever with a dear friend.

Wonderful old Podgorica, so close to savage Albania, with your strange mixture of races and creeds, Christian, Turk and Orthodox, your maze-like market ablaze with colour, your deep blue skies and your unchecked passions, never will our hearts warm to another place as they have to you! Time will bring with it our cheap civilisation, your old warriors will vanish, these wild lands so dear to you will be wild no longer! Will your quiet streets ever echo the rumble of traffic, I wonder? Will trains, trams, newspapers, theatres, music-halls, shops, and even bowler-hats ever invade your cobbled roads? Heaven forbid! Whatever betide, keep your present virtues intact; though your passions are savage and primitive, meanness has no place in them; lying, thieving, drunkenness are unknown to you, they only thrive in more enlightened lands; therefore let our parting wish be that you remain ever as you are; let the great world fight and struggle as it likes, while you are content to live wrapped up in your own life, upholding the noblest traditions of those heroes, your fathers.

When the old Vizier bridge, the ages-old river and the great plain lay beneath us, and we were climbing up the stricken Karst, we turned in our seats to take a last look at the white dots beneath the giant hills, and then, almost with a sigh, turned our faces and our minds to fresh scenes. There is no need to recount our journey back to Cetinje, over the rock-strewn saddle to Rjeka

and up the marvellous road to the summit. Two incidents are worthy of notice : the first nearly cost one if not more lives, the other I will recount later.

We were descending the steep road to Rjeka, which clings to the mountain-side; on the left the road is bordered by a low wall, and looking over that one can see the river seven hundred feet perpendicular beneath. In addition the surface of the precipice in whose side the road is cut is very irregular, so that the road has to round innumerable acute turns, similar to those upon its climb from Rjeka to the capital. We were travelling, I should say, about twelve miles an hour and rounding a sharp turn, Rodgers blowing the horn, when, without an instant's warning, there flashed round the corner a red-coated horseman at full gallop. He was almost on top of the bonnet before either he or I realised what had happened. There was no time to swerve, and all I could do was to stop Mercédès in half her own length. He was an excellent horseman, and his training in a land where life is held a little thing stood him in good stead. Pulling hard at the bit his horse reared up, its two front legs hovering over the bonnet, and then swung round to the right, for half a second overhanging the precipice. Our hearts stopped beating till a moment later down came the horse upon the solid road, and stood trembling as its rider leapt off. We pulled to the outside edge, and the man led his horse past, smiling weakly and saying a few words in Serbish, at the same time wiping his forehead with the sleeve of his jacket. That was as narrow a thing as I ever remember, and we put up a small prayer of thankfulness that it had not proved fatal.

Rjeka was lost in the quickly enveloping shadows, as we passed between its bazaar-like houses, commencing the great climb. It is a thrilling experience, that ascent, first up a thousand feet to the little café, and then the 1500 feet to be climbed up that bleak stony valley, with

its memories of bloody deeds and merciless slaughter. The road was deep in shadow and made the turns all the more exciting. We climbed at the greatest speed we dared, rounding the hair-pins with unabated power. Now and then we met folk and cattle, but the men, with bared heads, cleared the road. Once we encountered the old horse diligence. So narrow was the road that we had to run two wheels high upon the loose stone heaps ; in doing so it heeled us over till our canopy caught the bus and all but wrecked it, much to the consternation of its tightly packed human load.

Just before we reached the summit and were ascending the last leg of the road at over our average speed, the magnificent panorama came into view, and involuntarily I stopped Mercédès. As we had descended three days before, the details had been obscured by clouds ; now they stood revealed by the ruddy light of a dying sun. The lake lay like a sheet of gold, every rock upon the near mountains took definite form, but what caught our eyes and held them enchanted was the sunset upon the Albanian hills.

Those favoured mortals who have stood upon the Mendle summit in Tirol at eventide and gazed awe-struck at the Rosengarten, or have seen the last rays of the evening sun fall upon the jagged peaks that rise above San Martino di Castrazzo, and remained spell-bound, can best conceive the sight that held us fascinated. The whole range of the Albanian Alps, with the Procletze, seem to be on fire, as though heated by an unseen furnace. Never a Dolomite shone so ruddily ; no painter dare portray such colour lest he be accused of exaggeration and his work banished as the wanderings of a madman. It was the spirit of Nature herself that breathed o'er the scene, and for a time no one spoke. As in Tirol, the light commenced to fade ; we had arrived at that exact moment when, down to their very base, the hills were

illuminated. Quickly the dark shadows crept up the steep slopes, blotting out the flame colour and leaving behind only an ashy-grey hue. Now only the topmost summits retain their fire, and then, as though relinquishing the unequal struggle, this too vanishes and the whole range is dead. How cold and cruel they now look! Destitute of all life! And with a start we come back to consciousness.

Ten minutes later, just two hours from Podgorica, we drew up before the doors of the Grand Hotel. Although we had only been away three days, we felt as though we had been travelling for weeks, and were unspeakably glad to spend a quiet evening discussing what we had seen and speculating as to what we might yet be called upon to face ere we quitted the land of the Black Mountain.

Many visitors had arrived from Cattaro by carriage, and it was quite amusing to listen to their conversation at the table d'hôte when, though they were leaving at six next morning, and had only arrived the evening before, they would return to civilisation (?) fully convinced that they had seen everything of interest in the land and, metaphorically speaking, patting Montenegro on the head with all the assurance of their splendid ignorance.

Next morning (Thursday) I had an appointment with Mr. Ramadamavitch for ten o'clock, and before this took Mercédès to the chemist to get our sixteen-gallon bottle of benzine. It took quite a time to empty into the tank, as two men could only just lift the bottle. It was done at last, to the satisfaction of a considerable crowd, many of whom would have lit cigarettes had I not taken the first one from out of a man's mouth and, throwing it on the ground, trodden it well underfoot. The rest took warning and I had no more trouble, though I believe one zealous man, acting under the idea that he was assisting,

endeavoured to strike a match to see how much benzine remained in the thick green bottle and was promptly disillusioned by Rodgers.

At ten precisely I was received by Mr. Ramadamavitch at the Foreign Office. He was interested in our journey, and exercising great tact I smoothed over our adventures upon the " new road " to Kolašin. A great disappointment awaited us; though we knew it not, the little kingdom was being shaken by grave internal troubles; young Montenegro was fast losing its head, and only the most stringent measures could hope to stamp out the pernicious doctrine that, alas! was thriving with all the fierceness of some foul weed. Only a week before a secret manufactory of bombs had been discovered at Kolašin, and other similar troubles were being thoroughly investigated. It surpasses me now, when I think matters over, that we, utter strangers, with only a personal introduction or two, should have been given such absolute freedom from restraint.

Howbeit, we now learnt that King Nikolas had been called away to Nikšić and had left Cetinje the previous morning. " I spoke to His Majesty," said Mr. Ramadamavitch, " and he commanded me to express to you his regrets, and to say that he will be pleased to receive you whenever you visit Montenegro again."

I need hardly say how disappointed we were; it seemed as though Fate had specially interfered to again prevent my meeting with King Nikolas. However, we are too old travellers to let anything damp our spirits, so that I commenced to plan out our future movements. A telegram arrived from the hotel for me; it was from the Austrian Naval Authorities, saying that they had reserved the pontoon for Monday. This was a day earlier than I had asked for and quite altered our plans. We had yet to visit South Montenegro, including Antivari, Dolcigno, and Skutari in Albania, and had four days in

which to do it. If we could reach Vir Pazar, from where the boat leaves for Skutari, in time to-day, and leave Mercédès there, we could sleep in Skutari to-night, returning Friday, Saturday to Dolcigno, and Sunday back to Cetinje. If not we must go on to Antivari to-day and trust to luck to get the rest in. The boat was supposed to leave Vir Pazar at one o'clock, and as it was quite thirty miles away, via Rjeka, and two mountain ranges had to be crossed, it would be utter chance if we got it.

Mr. Ramadamavitch was extremely kind and introduced me to the manager of the Italian company, who have constructed and still run the light railway over the Sutormann Pass between Antivari and Vir Pazar, also the boats upon the lake. He said the only boat left at two o'clock (and the hotel manager, when I asked later, was decided that it left at three). However, he kindly gave me a personal letter to the station officials at Vir Pazar to allow Mercédès to stand in the yard, and under cover, if possible, also to give us whatever assistance we stood in need of.

Mercédès was ready packed, and directly these arrangements had been completed there was nothing more to keep us. Again Mr. Ramadamavitch saw us off, and we were soon speeding up among the now familiar rocks. It was a run against time ; we had two hours if the boat left at one o'clock, and as we knew the road so well we made a record journey down the long descent to Rjeka. The mountains of Albania brought back vivid memories, but we had no time to dwell upon them and were only thankful that we were not on our way to beautiful Kolašin, through the lovely garden of Montenegro.

At the little café, perched a thousand feet directly above Rjeka, we found the road blocked by a long line of artillery—guns and ammunition waggons—their escort squatting lazily about, imbibing raw white brandy in considerable quantities. We encountered a certain

amount of difficulty in squeezing Mercédès past, but once clear I halted her in order to descend and return for a photograph of the scene. I knew that the guns were part of a consignment from Russia—a present from the Czar to King Nikolas—and were being conveyed from Vir Pazar to secret positions among the Karst round Cetinje. It was the novelty of catching them in that particular position, of showing Montenegro's passion for readiness, that alone induced me to descend to record it. In every country it is strictly forbidden to photograph fortifications, but these guns, in their present state, could hardly come under that category, and, moreover, I held King Nikolas' own permission to photograph what I would. I decided to avail myself of this unique opportunity.

Ken, as it happened, accompanied me, and therefore took a leading part in the final tableau.

The scene was indeed a gay one : the dull-coloured guns and waggons, the red and blue of the lounging escort, the background of naked Karst, up which we could trace the astounding road, clinging with precarious grip as it crept, hand over hand, upwards. To the right stretched the long wave of rugged Albania, towering high above the beautiful lake ; the sun blazed down with intolerable heat, turning the grey rocks, as it seemed, into virgin snow, dazzling our eyes ; for a few moments we stood enjoying the charming picture, then, taking up a good position, I opened my kodak.

Had a party of Albanians suddenly appeared in their midst a greater change could not have taken place among the hitherto sleepy-looking Montenegrans. With a simultaneous bound every man leapt to his feet, and in a moment Ken and I were covered by a score of revolvers. The sergeant in charge, a gigantic specimen even for a Montenegran, sprang forward, pouring out a string of gutturals and literally foaming at the mouth with pas-

tion. So astonished were we that for a time we remained rooted to the spot, the nearest revolver muzzle barely a yard from our heads, then I remembered my all-powerful permit, and produced it forthwith, handing it to the sergeant, with a smile at the warlike preparations, a smile that quickly vanished when I realised the seriousness of our position—*the sergeant could not read.* To him the permit was not worth the paper it was written upon, our vaunted permission was void.

Now we realised why Mr. Ramadamavitch had been so anxious that we should accept the permanent escort of a member of the King's own bodyguard during our tour. The sergeant (so we learnt afterwards) had received orders to shoot anyone found interfering with the guns, and with the officialism of a common man, vested for a time with unlimited power, meant to carry his orders into effect forthwith. He spoke only Russian, and to him our answers were, of course, unintelligible ; the revolver quivered in his hand, and grasping the situation, I closed my kodak and slipped it back into its case. Still fuming with passion, the sergeant hesitated for a few seconds, during which Ken and I surveyed the circle of threatening muzzles, then reluctantly hissed an order which had the effect of making his men lower their weapons, though they evinced a certain amount of reluctance to obey.

There remained nothing further to be done ; clearly we were looked upon as spies, and many vicious glances came our way. I lay no blame upon Montenegro for this unpleasant incident, by rights we should have accepted the Government's offer of an escort, and had therefore only ourselves to blame for what had occurred. The men had charge of the guns, we had attempted to obtain a photograph of them, offering in excuse no intelligible explanation, and producing only a piece of paper that might have contained anything, for all they knew to

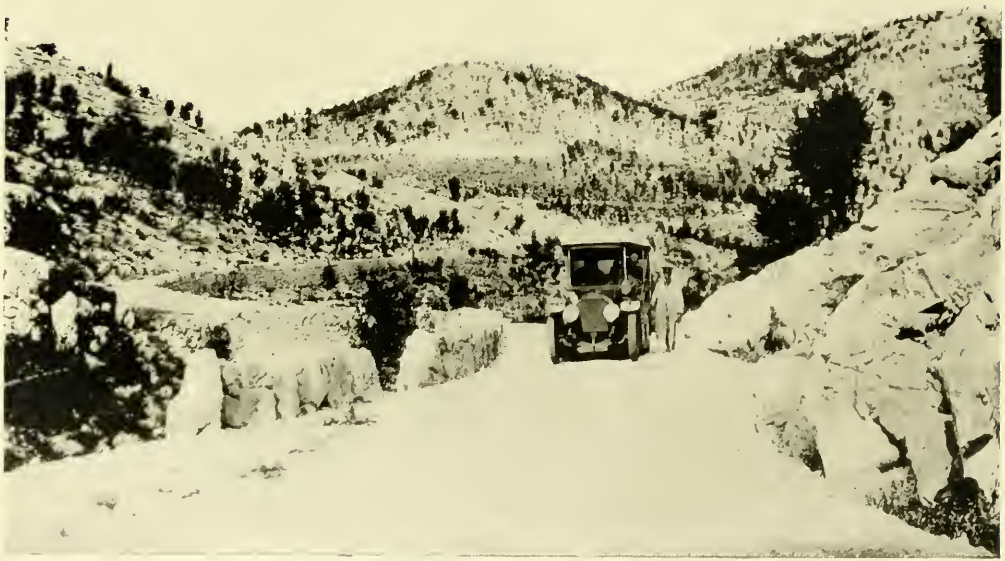
the contrary. For a permit, no matter how strongly it is worded, is quite useless when the people to whom it should appeal are unable to decipher it.

So we were firmly, if not very politely, escorted back to Mercédès and sped upon our way.

For one reason I was glad. Up till now we had seen only the sunny side of the Montenegran character; tales of war and legends, it is true, had been poured into our ears, yet withal every warrior we encountered, albeit armed to the teeth, had seemed but a big child, delighted beyond measure with Mercédès as with a new toy. Indeed, it had been hard to realise the other side of the picture. For a few seconds the veil had been lifted; no longer were we welcomed as friends, but regarded as enemies; the child of the Crnagora stood revealed in the searching light of a foe; we caught a glimpse of the centuries of savagery behind him, unconquerable, defiant; from his eyes shone remorseless hatred, his primeval instincts had burst through the thin veneer with which the twentieth century had endeavoured to gloss them over, the blood of a thousand fighters was roused to fever heat at the sight of his country's foes—in a word we had gazed upon the naked spirit of Montenegro, the spirit that had enabled her to preserve untarnished, through all the long centuries, her absolute freedom, and which to-day makes her children eager to face death, just as they are ready to give death to any who should attempt to deprive them of one iota of their birthright.

At Rjeka we left our old road, and crossing the river were upon the new road. The main steamer for Skutari starts from Vir Pazar and is joined by a little launch from Rjeka, which had left a couple of hours ago.

In all Montenegro there is no road like that between Rjeka and Vir Pazar. Opened only a year ago, it is perhaps one of the finest examples of mountain roads in the Balkans. The fact of its comparatively recent



SO INTENSE IS THE GLARE OF THE SUN UPON THE NAKED LIMESTONE AS TO GIVE ONE THE IMPRESSION OF A SNOW LANDSCAPE. (MONTENEGRO)

completion greatly prejudiced our minds against it, but, save for a short distance at its commencement and descent to Vir, it was a treat that we fully enjoyed. A long rise lifts it high above the lake, and this is followed by a series of ascents and descents, now clinging to the precipice edge, now winding over the summits of the stricken hills. The scenery is delightfully varied; at one moment we are surrounded only by naked rocks, and the next the eye is being charmed by a view of the glittering lake.

Time was passing, and at a quarter to one we came into sight of Vir Pazar. Once upon a time the lake threw an arm between two great ranges of mountains—one range stretches between it and the Adriatic, the other to Rjeka. This arm of water has gradually become filled with earth and now forms the flat valley upon which Vir Pazar stands, a tiny village built in the form of a circle and clinging to the base of the opposite mountains.

Four sharp zigzags lower the road in a short time down to the lake, and a perfectly flat stretch brings us to the village. The lake, indeed, just reaches the few houses, but so overgrown is it with weeds that one must take a small boat to the steamer, which occupies about half an hour along a narrow channel, kept open by two primitive dredgers. Crossing a bridge we found the station, and, descending, I went inside to look for someone in authority. I found a small Italian enjoying his lunch under the shade of a spreading tree, and as he wore a large and important red cap quite out of proportion to his size, asked if he was *il capitano*, to whom my letter was addressed. He was, and read the letter through, leaving his lunch to come with me to the yard. But first I inquired if the boat had left. "Yes, five minutes ago; sometimes it leaves at one, sometimes at four, all depending upon the mail-boat at Antivari. Yesterday it left at three, to-morrow it might leave at——" A true Italian shrug of the

shoulders, so exasperating to the Britisher, ended the sentence. It was no good our bothering him to-day, as nothing remained but to make for Antivari, lying over the Sutormann Pass, and Montenegro's largest seaport. We explained that we should be with him the following morning, and with many promises that he would have a place cleared for us, we swept out of Vir Pazar and commenced the climb. After we had mounted some few hundred feet, and before the road loses sight of the lake, we halted for lunch and to discuss fresh plans. A few boys collected at a distance and respectfully watched every mouthful down our throats; but otherwise we dined in comparative privacy to what usually happened upon these occasions.

I do not know when that road over the Sutormann Mountains was constructed, but it looked as though it had been there from time immemorable. It was as old as the hills, but it had one virtue—it was as firm as the rocks themselves; years of rain had washed all loose earth away, and here and there the road was rather like a river bed; yet we found nothing at all insurmountable, and rather child's play after our experience to Kolašin. Between the lake and the Adriatic lie a range of mountains, some three thousand feet in height, not unlike those that hem in the Riviera and shelter it from the cold north winds. Very steadily we climb upward; except near the summit there are no hair-pin turns, and then only one or two, and quite large ones at that. Unlike the other ascents, the ground is fertile, and never for an instant are we out of sight of green trees and, on the lower slopes, of vineyards. It is a pass requiring care here and there, where the road has suffered badly from the rain or is covered with loose stones fallen from the hill-side, but the majority of the climb is simple. Behind us, as we rose higher, we gained a beautiful view of Montenegro, lying like a large relief map, hundreds of

THE WILD SUMMIT OF THE SUTORMANN PASS. MONTENEGRO

round grey peaks as far as the eye could follow, a great expanse of barren bleak Karst, and the stronghold that for so many centuries defied the Infidel.

It is a wonderful view, that from the summit of the Sutormann Pass looking back, and one that calls perhaps as vividly as anything to the imagination the legends of suffering and the great struggle that has made Montenegro a nation. To the mind of the engineer the contemplation of the light single-line railway is perhaps the most interesting. Without the aid of cogs, and by sheer grading, the narrow-gauge rail climbs with the road some two thousand feet. It is a wonderful piece of engineering and worthy of the country that planned and constructed it. Some seven hundred feet or so below the summit it enters a tunnel and is lost to view.

Upon the high ridge to our left was fought one of the fiercest battles in Montenegran history. The Moslem held these hills, and, vainglorious in the security of numbers and position, had little fear of attack. A comparatively small band of Montenegrans, scorning the apparent superiority of their enemy, scaled the hill-side like wild cats, finding footing where only a mountain chamois could pass. So fierce and unexpected was the attack that the Turk was forced to fly, and the victorious Montenegrans pressing upward stormed the massive old castle that commands the summit. As we reach the highest point this stately old building comes into view upon a giant rock. Looking at the frowning walls edging the precipice, one can only marvel at the valour of these old heroes, who never reckoned odds and captured the fortress, thus giving into their hands Antivari and the sea-coast.

Once over the summit our eyes are gladdened by a beautiful view of the deep blue Adriatic. There is something that ever draws our hearts to the sea; views of snow and ice, of exquisite landscapes and wondrous

monuments must all give place to the ever-changing expanse of the ocean. All our lives we have lived beside or upon it, and now, after the days of arid scenes, its cool expanse breathed a welcome to which our hearts responded.

Some 2700 feet beneath the coast-line stretched to a point that sheltered a tiny bay, where clustered a group of white specks. "Antivari!" we exclaimed, which, with Dolcigno, are the only seaports of Montenegro. If you look at the map you will see that to form an even boundary the line of the Sutormann Hills should be the frontier, instead of which the line is broken and extended to a narrow neck just including the two ports. These Montenegro owes to Mr. Gladstone, who fought as hard for them in times of peace as did Montenegro upon the field. Austria is jealous of Antivari; Turkey's mouth is literally watering for Dolcigno, but they belong to the little kingdom, and she can smile at their impotent anger.

Beneath us we can count the ruins of four smaller castles, standing one above the other, and speaking eloquently of bloody days gone, thank heaven, into the dim past. We see our road winding down in circuitous loops and intermingling with those of the railway that soon emerges from the mountain-side. At first the road is rather bad, for much wreckage has been washed down by the rain, great stones and fallen trees, deep sand and mud, small avalanches, several feet deep, all of which are being quickly removed by gangs of men. We had some small trouble in passing, but nothing serious. As we descended we were astounded by the wonderful vegetation.

Once in January we journeyed from Biarritz along the south of France, facing snow and ice, and altogether suffering as bad a week as I ever remember. We left Frejus shivering in the cold, and late one afternoon crossed the low Esterells, dropping into Cannes—and summer.

Never did we forget that change, from winter to summer in less than an hour. I quote this to illustrate something of what we now experienced, though in a different sense. We had left Vir Pazar in hot sunshine and climbed up that fertile valley, but it was a barren waste compared with that we were now passing through. Never have I seen such vegetation in Europe: this is the "Garden of Montenegro," if ever she possesses one. It seemed a different country altogether—the Riviera was bleak by comparison, Ragusa was naked; for here the grapes weighed down the vines to the ground, peaches grew like apples in an orchard, oranges, pomegranates and melons in huge quantities and proportions. It was a land flowing with milk and honey, a gigantic hot-house of nature, and we could scarcely believe our eyes. Then we struck the olive groves, passing through mile after mile of them. What trees they were, with trunks thicker than massive oaks, but split into a thousand stems, as though the great blanket of leaves and fruit was supported by roots grown in the shape of a trunk. As old they looked as the cedars of Lebanon, older than the Sutormann itself. Centuries, nay myriads of years, they seemed to represent, calling to the mind an indescribable feeling of antiquity, as though one were gazing at some Egyptian obelisk or sarcophagus. It appears foolish to describe them thus, but that was how they impressed themselves upon our imagination.

It is strange that one can never gain any reliable information unless one finds it out by personal experience. I had always imagined Antivari lying by the beautiful blue waters; I pictured its ruined castle, far famed as the finest throughout the Balkans, as gazing out to sea. No one to whom we had spoken of our journey ever thought fit of contradicting this idea or telling us that Antivari (Bar) lay some miles inland, in a valley hidden from sight by thick trees. When we came to a cross-road

we naturally followed the one to the white houses by the fair harbour in the distance, and were more than surprised to see no stately castle, but only a few very modern white buildings and a still more modern harbour. Our surprise was not lessened by meeting a fatigue party of slouching Austrian soldiers under a sergeant. The water's edge we found a very modern scene indeed. A railway station on our right, a busy harbour on our left, Austrian soldiers and many Italian workmen—as unlike Montenegro as could be. Italian and German sounded in our ears, and upon inquiry we gleaned that this was Pretan, the seaport of Antivari.

A large white building high up upon the hill-side was marked " Hotel," and as we learnt that Antivari possessed no decent accommodation, I climbed the long flight of over one hundred stairs to inspect the hotel. I found a well-dressed Italian reading in an easy-chair upon the unfinished terrace, who proved to be the manager. We learnt afterwards that this building had been erected by the Italian Company, that ran the railways, as a home for their men, and that as travellers were few and far between, it served admirably for both purposes. It was full, the Italian said, quite full; stay, he had two bedrooms upon the topmost floor. They were tiny wood-lined rooms, not unlike those of many a Swiss châlet, and evidently occupied. However, the boxes and clothes were unceremoniously turned out in our favour. Mercédès' abode for the night now remained to be settled, and as anything approaching a shed or even a lock-up yard was conspicuous by its absence, there remained nothing for it but to let her stand at the foot of the hill, close to the still waters. By virtue of our " permit " the gendarmerie supplied a sentry who, with a box of cigarettes and a heavy revolver, was told off to watch over her till morning came.

What an exquisite position that hotel enjoys, gazing

out to the open sea, and upon the beautiful bay flanked by a semicircle of towering mountains. The colouring, perhaps more than anything else, enchants the eye; the sea is of lapis-lazuli, the sky is of the same deep hue, the mountains are different shades of green, arranged by nature's master mind, and tapering to a rich red-brown as their rocky summits rise above the verdure. If this spot was only within touch of the great world, how eagerly it would be seized upon! What a rival it would be to the Riviera; even Abazzia, comparatively near, would suffer. It is rumoured that a certain company once offered the King a fabulous sum to grant them the right of erecting a casino here similar to that at Monte Carlo. The offer was only made once, for King Nikolas' reply did not encourage a second bid. "I am a leader of men, not a keeper of a gambling hell," he is reported to have said. It is an answer worthy of his principles and one that his whole life justifies.

Unfortunately Montenegro is not taking advantage of this favoured spot; true, the Crown Prince has a plain square house in the centre of the bay, but otherwise Montenegro seems practically to have no hold. Austria lies but a few short miles away, and opposite the harbour stands the lonely Austrian Vice-Consulate, while Austrian soldiers are many upon the quay. The employés of the railway are Italians to a man, so that between the two Montenegro is but little considered. It is a thousand pities that this valuable bay should be so neglected. In the old days, when Montenegro was completely land-locked, as Serbia is to-day, her one cry to the powers was, "Give us a seaport." Now she has two seaports, and, alas! they have not come up to her expectations. Dolcigno is too exposed to the open sea, while Antivari is overshadowed by Spizza, from which Austria casts a watchful eye. Montenegro is debarred from possessing a navy under a clause of the Berlin Treaty, while Austria

is able to patrol the coast. Antivari, however, receives the mails from Bari in Italy, and is therefore the direct route for Skutari. Still, Montenegro owns the ground and one day will wake up to the fact, and throwing out the strangers within her gates, will work the harbour and run the railway for Montenegro and Montenegro alone. Till then a heavy revolver, gorgeous raiment, an excellent cigarette and a cup of coffee or glass of white brandy beneath some spreading tree is the acme of her desires, where her children can while away the time and discuss the stye that is in their neighbour's eye, and by doing so ignore the one that is eating deep into their own.

Not far from Prince Danilo's residence lies the Austrian frontier, for as she holds the fringe of coast at Cattaro, so does Austria extend her possessions, scarcely wide enough to give footing to the garrison, yet keeping command of the sea. With jealous eye she watches Antivari's seaport, but possession being nine points of the law, Montenegro can afford to smile at her impotent wrath.

As at Ragusa, the sunsets lend the final touch to this earthly paradise. Far out to sea a ball of fire slowly sinks over the horizon, tipping each gentle wave with golden light and suffusing the rugged outline of the hills, clothing the naked rocks with a garment of fire ; from blood-red to the deepest blue the sky mellows. There is a stillness in the air, while the scent of hot-house blooms rises from the ground. Until the last glow had vanished we leant upon the wooden balconies of our rooms, high above the waters, dreaming and gathering memories that would go to join the thousands already stowed far back in our minds.

We were the only *bona fide* visitors in the hotel and fared sumptuously. An excellent dinner was served in a private room, and, wonder of wonders, by a waiter in faultless garb, donned for our special delectation, the like of which even Cetinje cannot show. We had now to

plan out our journeys, matters being somewhat complicated by the information that the Skutari boat did not sail on a Sunday. It was a question between Dolcigno and Skutari, and knowing what we did we had no difficulty in choosing the latter. Dolcigno (Ulcinj) is a tiny village upon the Turkish border some thirty miles away, and only lately has a road to it been constructed, while Skutari is the capital of Albania and in the empire of the Sultan. By rising early we could catch a flying glimpse of Antivari and return over the Sutormann Pass, so as to be at Vir Pazar by ten o'clock and Skutari by night, returning next morning and sleeping at Cetinje, thus leaving Sunday free, which, in the light of after events, proved a very welcome rest. Matters arranged, we were ready to retire, and, escorted by our faultless servitor—who, by the way, had made us feel somewhat uncomfortable by his immaculate turn-out—carrying a lantern, we trooped up three flights of creaky stairs to our rooms, which, according to a custom we were becoming used to, were illuminated by one guttering candle apiece. We had given orders to be called at sunrise (about six o'clock), and bade good night to our attentive servitor, who bowed with conscious dignity and vanished like a familiar spirit into the gloom.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RULE OF THE MOSLEM

HURRIED PEEP AT ANTIVARI—RETURN TO VIR—LEAVE MERCÉDÈS AND RODGERS—EMBARK WITH DIFFICULTY—PLAVNICA—WEARY JOURNEY—CHIRROCO—LANDING AT SKUTARI—DISAPPOINTING BAZAAR—RIDE IN A MOSLEM CAB—SKUTARI FROM THE TOURIST'S POINT OF VIEW—DEPARTURE.

IT was nearly eight o'clock when we left the calm waters next morning. There is only one incident, amusing in its very absurdity, that I must recount; the sentry was at his post, and we remarked among ourselves how small he was for a Montenegran. To my surprise he spoke Italian fluently, and his dark hair and eyes all pointed to that nationality. I had liberally rewarded him privately for his vigil, and as Rodgers started the engine he saluted, and speaking in a low voice asked for fifteen kronen.

"Why?" I demanded, greatly surprised.

"For watching the *auto:* it is the charge of the police," he answered.

Those who have lived much in sunny Italy will comprehend easily this touch, and instantly our faces broke into smiles.

"Certainly," I replied. "But where is the bill or receipt?" I had him there, and smiling weakly he again asked for the money. The thing was so simple, so utterly transparent, and our only regret was that he wore the

WHAT DEEDS THESE OLD WALLS HAVE WITNESSED ERE THEY CRUMBLED AWAY.
(CASTLE OF ANTIVARI. MONTENEGRO)

Montenegran uniform. In short words and few I explained my opinion and gave him the hotel at Cetinje if he wished to advance his claim further. For a moment he hesitated, till, as I favoured him with an imperious stare worthy of the blood royal, his hand went involuntarily to his cap, and with the rest he stood at the salute as we drove off. Hidden from sight we burst out laughing, and at once banished from our minds the only attempt at a swindle that we were treated to in the land of Montenegro. This casts no reflection whatever upon the Montenegran character, but rather shows the unavoidable results of our modern civilisation. The man may not have been a Montenegran by birth, but only a fugitive from another land, becoming naturalised, as so many do who have entered the King's service.

Reaching the cross-roads of yesterday we followed through more olive groves, and passing between the ancient trunks suddenly emerged into full view of old Antivari. There is something very impressive in the first glimpse one obtains of that old fortress, or rather what remains in its place to-day. Its walls, riddled and crumbled, are low, and so overgrown with green that one has some little difficulty in distinguishing them. The castle stands upon a cone-shaped hill and gave me at first the impression of a gigantic row of teeth, for unlike most ruined keeps there is no part more destroyed than another, no apparent bastion or gateway left standing, nothing but a confused mass of stonework that year by year is being strangled by the foul weeds. The sun was rising behind the hills that stand at the back of the castle, yet, trusting to luck, I exposed a film with surprising results, when one considers the light, and after dwelling upon the scene we turned away. We did not attempt to explore, for if we missed the boat at Vir, good-bye to Skutari, as far as we were concerned. We were loath to leave the old place, but time pressed. What

deeds those old Turkish walls had witnessed ere they finally crumbled away! Indeed, one might spend days exploring the decayed ruins, and nothing save that pontoon on Monday could have torn us away.

Our journey to Vir was charming in the freshness of the morning air; we soon left the rich vegetation and olive groves, and with the railway scaled the heights; here and there the road caused some anxiety, but with comparative ease we topped the three thousand feet and took a last view of the blue expanse before plunging down the long descent. Vir Pazar lay broiling in the sunshine, and to make time pass Fate graciously arranged a local cattle market for our amusement. With true Italian thoroughness nothing whatever had been done for Mercédès, and I had to seek out our friend of the red cap. After some trouble an open space in the station yard was assigned to us, and after moving a few boxes Mercédès was stowed. Moving these wooden boxes brought down the wrath of the police upon our innocent shoulders, for the cases were Government property. However, an interview with the Chief of Police, thanks to our "permit," put things right, and evoked a promise that Mercédès should be under Government vigilance. A large tarpaulin sheet was eventually rummaged out that covered Mercédès to the ground, and this firmly tied on, we were free to devote ourselves to the contemplation of the market.

Vir Pazar is often an island, the lake rises and the flat marsh is flooded. This is caused by the choking up of the Bojana, the river that empties the lake at Skutari and is therefore under Turkish control. Each winter it becomes blocked and the lake rises and floods the low plains. With characteristic incompetence, the Moslem makes no effort to grapple with this problem, and only worthless promises of reform are returned in answer to the complaints that the Montenegran Government are

BEAUTIFUL VIR PAZAR UPON THE LAKE OF SKUTARI. (MONTENEGRO)

continually making. The waters even rise higher and the inhabitants retire to the first floor till the flood subsides ; the houses are all built with arched basements, the living-rooms upon the upper storey. The lake was low at present and reached the town in the form of a sluggish river.

A short bridge connects the station with the town, and behind the yard rises a low rocky hill some fifty feet or so, crowned by a small fort ; on this the cattle were displayed, cows and sheep, scores of goats wandering round the precipitous base of the little keep, apparently unconscious that a slip would bring them down upon the road beneath. The scene was gorgeous, dotted with the red and blue of the different groups, buying and selling cattle, a moving mass of colour, as though gaily decked ants were crawling over their hill. But the main market lay across the bridge in the open square, and though we had seen the markets of Cetinje, Nikšić and Podgorica, even this one of Vir is in its own way worthy to rank with anything we had seen. At Nikšić the folk were rougher, at Podgorica they were unique in themselves, at Cetinje the very opposite, too civilised, but at Vir they were purely Montenegran, seen in its most brilliant aspect. I think we saw more real colour in that little market than anywhere else ; there was not even a Turk or an Albanian to be seen, nothing but the gorgeous children of the Black Mountain. Nay, I mistake, for upon such a day as this the mountains are almost white ; the scene is very gay, yet one cannot forget that this is the scene of the Montenegran vespers.

In 1702 Prince Danilo had been asked by the Christian inhabitants of Zeta to consecrate a new church ; under the sworn safeguard of Dervish Pasha, Governor of Skutari, he descended from the Crnagora to fulfil their pious request. No sooner had he accomplished his mission and was upon the point of returning, than he was

treacherously seized by order of Dervish Pasha, who, after torturing him, condemned him to death. It was only by paying a heavy ransom that his outraged people were enabled to rescue him alive. A year later took place the Montenegran vespers. Under a solemn council it was decided that every renegade in the land should die : five brothers were chosen to lead the avengers, and upon Christmas Eve commenced the great act of vengeance at Vir Pazar. To every Turk was offered one choice, the Cross or the sword. Those who accepted Christianity were spared, those who refused being slain. Thus Christmas morning 1703 dawned red, and Montenegro awoke to learn she was whole at last, in faith as well as freedom.

We suffered an atrocious lunch at the railway station, with the red-capped one as our guest, and by two o'clock the boat was ready to convey us to the steamer. This barque proved a curiously shaped Turkish skim, a kind of poor relation to a gondola, rowed similar to that beautiful craft by two men, but of so villainous a countenance that one wondered nature could have made so terrible a mistake as their existence. It takes over half an hour rowing along a dismal marsh, the narrow channel kept clear by two prehistoric-looking dredgers, and at last we come in sight of the steamer, a miserable, tug-shaped launch, hardly big enough for river ferrying. It is crowded with people, and a smaller tug is alongside ; this is the boat from Rjeka. There is no ladder, no one offers any assistance, and it is just scramble aboard or be left behind.

I do not know a more disgusting example of utter incompetency than that shown by the lazy Italians who formed the crew, and I shudder to think of the position of, say, two or more ladies travelling alone who desired to visit Skutari. As at Antivari, you must find everything out by personal experience. No one in Cetinje can tell you anything more than that you take the boat either from

A MAZE OF DAZZLING COLOUR: RED AND BLUE PREDOMINATING. (VIR PAZAR, MONTENEGRO)

Rjeka or Vir to beautiful Skutari in Albania, of which I shall have a few hard facts to make known later, but for the present—Ken and I jumped aboard and had to haul Sheila and Dorothy up the four-foot side of the vessel and over a three-foot rail, without a ladder or any show of assistance. Once aboard we were jammed against the engine skylight, and as another boat came alongside a crowd of rough peasants hustled aboard. We were trying to shield the ladies, but one big-boned fellow bustled roughly against Dorothy. Ken had him by the collar next moment, and as everybody's tempers were by now thoroughly roused, I thought for a moment that there would be trouble. However, the man, on seeing whom he had knocked against, apologised in his rough way, and Ken, seeing he was really sorry, released him. We fought our way aft, where there was a clear space, and then breathed freely. We had meantime to carry our own bags and do everything ourselves. Again, I question what would happen to ladies travelling alone, and what protection they could gain against the uncouth roughness of the men. Were a Montenegran gentleman or officer aboard I doubt not he would assist them, but otherwise, as in the present case, I fear their plight would be sorry indeed.

At last, about three o'clock, we got under weigh, towing three huge barges after us, and made slow tracks for Plavnica, the place we had reached by mistake the morning we left Podgorica for Kolašin. We arrived in due course, picked up a further batch of people in a boat similar to the one we came off in, dropped half a dozen Montenegran soldiers and the laden barges, and took two empty barges in tow, heading for the distant end of the lake. Among those who had come aboard at Plavnica was our Scotch friend from Podgorica, who had business in Skutari. He knew everyone, and soon a select party, consisting of the captain and one or two Montenegran

officials, gathered together beneath the canopy at the stern, where for a sum equal to about three times the ordinary fare we had the space reserved for ourselves. The captain, who was an Italian and spoke fair English, called upon one Marco, steward, cabin-boy, deck hand and stoker rolled into one, to bring coffee, cigarettes and liqueurs. We had some three and a half hours to while away, which slowly passed listening to the many queer tales and stories of the wild tribes upon the desolate mountains, and intersected by the thump-thump of the crazy engines. We learnt that this was really the local steamer between Vir and Rjeka, for the large one that usually plies was laid up for repairs, and this accounted for the overcrowding and the inconvenience we had suffered.

We were now passing up the centre of the lake and crossing the boundary between Montenegro and Turkey. On either shore rose the long ranges of grey-brown arid mountains, and our friend pointed out the Procletze, "The Damnable Mountains," which rise up clear and naked to the left against a background of intense blue. No stranger has ever trodden their summits, he told us. Twice he had arranged expeditions to set out to explore, and each time circumstances had prevented their departure. It is among these mountains that live the wildest of the Sultan's subjects, if one might so call these fervent Catholics who hold their lives as nothing compared with their absolute freedom. Practically they live apart, each tribe in its walled town, from which they emerge only as the avengers of blood ; they shoot and kill for the very lust of the thing, and carry on a deadly feud with the Montenegrans just over the border. It was strange to sit lolling at our ease (on hard wooden planks, by the way) and try to realise how primitive and savage are the lives of these people, who settle every dispute by force and who live amidst the naked hills so close upon either hand.

THE CRUSH OF BOATS AT THE LANDING. (SKUTARI HARBOUR. ALBANIA.)

We learn for the first time that the boat cannot get to within half a mile of the harbour at Skutari, and that though the bazaar is close by we must take a carriage to the hotel, some half-hour's drive. Only those who have ever groaned in the grip of a Turkish " growler " can understand the pleasant prospect that faced us.

Nearing Skutari, a little village to the right was pointed out as Chirroco, a name familiar throughout the Dalmatian coast as a destructive south-west wind, utterly opposed to the " Bora." The little cluster of houses lie due south-west from the lakes, so the wind that blows over the mountains at their back is named after the village.

It was growing dusk as we dropped anchor outside the harbour of Skutari. The town itself is hidden. Lying very low and straggling, we see only a wooden mass, the back of the bazaar, washed by a broad river, and upon the opposite bank rises the famous castle of Skutari, an imposing pile set high above the town. The river is crossed by a fine wooden bridge, and the water is alive with boats, great, long, half-graceful, half-clumsy craft often sixty feet in length and capable of holding quite thirty people, yet easily rowed by two men. What figures the boatmen are ! Hideous, dirty and noisy, they twisted their faces into all manner of shapes as they gesticulated and shouted at one another.

We were boarded by two neatly dressed officials in European clothes and red fezzes, who sniffed round us officiously ; here our friend came to our rescue, explaining fluently our names, which were duly written in strange characters from right to left ; and as no Moslem official can conceive the state expressed by " private means," both Ken and I were engineers for the occasion. Accompanied by a jumble of strange figures, we crowded into the boat, where everyone must stand. There was such a crush at the landing that we had to make our

way ashore by crossing over two empty boats. Our bags were instantly pounced upon by a gang of unkempt loafers, who fought for them like dogs over a bone ; from every side we were pestered for " baksheesh," and all our efforts could not free us. Though the market would be closed, having read of its splendour, we desired to see it, and after our luggage had been passed, it was put upon the cab, and one of our friend's servants sat with it while the vehicle was being driven round the outskirts, to wait for us at the other end of the market.

I suppose that everyone has his own ideals, and it may be urged that one night at Skutari does not entitle anyone to form an opinion of the town any more than does a visit to Cetinje give one a definite conception of Montenegro, but I think I am right in saying that for all the filthy, dirty, abominable and disgusting sights in Europe, commend me to Skutari. Guided by our friend, we walked through the bazaar ; almost every shop was shuttered, but here and there a few tobacco stores were yet open. The bazaar is a huge complex structure of wooden huts in rows, the whole front being open, while inside upon rugs squat such Oriental figures as make one unconsciously call to mind pages of the *Arabian Nights*. The roofs project over the front of the shops and actually join those on the opposite side. But the streets ! What examples of incapacity. Great stones protrude, here and there a pavement of rough cobbles has once been, but is now fallen beyond repair ; the ground between is dirty, very muddy, but worst of all are the pools of horrible stagnant water that smell so offensively that one has to turn away. All the refuse of a none-too-clean home is thrown into the gutter, and I think I can best sum up the whole description by saying that in all Skutari drainage is unknown, a state of affairs that accounts for the fevers and diseases that as some say are sent by discerning Heaven to

SKUTARI, THE CAPITAL OF ALBANIA

regulate the population. We had hardly stepped ashore before we gleaned this fact, and we reached the end of the market thankful beyond measure to be in the comparatively pure air again.

I think if our cab had simply driven to the hotel and left us to walk we could have forgiven it, but ours was no such luck, and we were bundled aboard. To begin with, no ordinary cab could have stood that half-hour's drive ; both springs of our chariot had long since sprung, all four wheels wobbled in an alarming manner, the near back axle had a nine-inch space along which the worn hub could play about ; consequently at one moment the wheel leant to the left at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and the next was being dragged reluctantly along at the same angle, protesting shrilly, upon the other side. There was something enchanting in its strange revolutions, and I who sat upon that side could not take my eyes off it. I reckoned it would last about a minute and a half, and that time being up, I sat numb in momentary expectation of being hurled out. I felt the apathy steal over me which, so it is said, a condemned man falls into while watching the preparations for his final exit from this world. That wheel fascinated me, and I never noticed that every stone and hole in the road, and they were legion, threw us five together as though we were corks upon the sea. " This is a-a-aw-awful-ell ! " Dorothy exclaimed, making a frantic clutch at Ken, who at that moment was endeavouring to ram the pipe down my throat with the back of his head.

We were being jolted along a white, dusty road, passing many walled houses with huge courtyards, but what interested us most was the wild medley of strange figures that we met and passed. Once upon a time a pasha was appointed to Skutari, who had lived much in different Turkish legations in Europe ; he soon achieved great unpopularity by his attempts (they never got any

further than attempts) at reform. To begin with, he shaved, and this alone prejudiced him beyond repair in the minds of all true believers. A pasha without a venerable beard! But his final offence, which proved the last straw to break the camel's back, was his uncomfortable ideas of cleanliness. He wanted to pave the roads, to introduce drainage; indeed, he got so far as to have the bazaar cobble laid, so that the rains left the streets as dry as possible, a state of things that has caused the venerable worshippers of Allah to feel uncomfortable ever since. Happily, he was prevented from doing further damage by his removal, which was demanded of the Sultan by the whole town, under a threat of revolt, unless the "Giaur Pasha" was recalled. He was dismissed in disgrace, and though part of his cobble streets still remain in the bazaar, praise be to the memory of the Prophet, the faithful are now able to wallow in the same dirt and filth as their honoured fathers did before them, and with the comforting reflection that their descendants will in all likelihood enjoy the same estimable privilege.

On our way to the hotel we passed a large white mosque, surrounded by a high wall, which was pointed out as the cause of the religious riots that shook the town only a year or so ago. Skutari is almost purely Moslem, while the whole of Albania is fervently and ferociously Catholic. If the Catholic and the Orthodox do not agree there is little chance for the Moslem. Often party feeling runs very high, the Moslem calling his Christian neighbour an unbelieving dog. And one night, by way of reprisal, some Albanians killed a pig (the forbidden animal of the Mahommedan) and left its bleeding body in the mosque. As if this was not deadly insult enough, they actually threw the entrails into the well before the mosque, thus poisoning the clear waters. As one man the Moslem population rose, only to be met

THE ČARČIJA. SKUTARI. ALBANIA

by the Albanians. The Pasha promptly stationed three regiments in the space between the two towns and offered to string up any person found carrying arms. But there was some desultory fighting before matters eventually cooled down.

We pass the modern-looking barracks, with their green-uniformed squads drilling, and shortly after the Konak, or palace of the Governor, an insignificant building lit by two lamps and guarded by a sentry. The hotel is a larger house than we had been accustomed to, and was run by a well-known Dalmatian from Zara, who welcomed us as friends of our Scotch friend and treated us to a remarkably decent dinner.

Skutari is a delight to the hunter of the bizarre, but a nightmare to the lover of hygiene, presenting as it does one vast, ever-changing panorama of almost grotesque characters. Its Turkish population is perhaps the most picturesque and atrociously dirty on the face of the globe, yet if one does not probe too deeply into their lives, but is content to enjoy the general effect from a distance, one may delight in sights that belie the very word of Europe as we understand the term. Best of all are the thousands of Albanians who upon market day come into the town; each village has its distinctive feature of dress and is faithfully represented. Wild figures are these: the men in long white trousers so loaded with broad black braid that one involuntarily tries to speculate as to what they must weigh. Over a flowing white skirt either a heavy black waistcoat or one of most gorgeous colouring; upon the head a white cap, half fez, half skull-cap, and over that a long linen cloth that is often draped like a turban, and, hanging down to the shoulders, is then wound round the neck, reminiscent of the daintier head-dress of the Arabs. In addition they wear a heavy leather cartridge-belt well stocked, and often a bandolier over the shoulder. Through the belt a

large loaded revolver is thrust, while a short, handy-looking, if somewhat obsolete gun is carried, completing as picturesque and at the same time as business-like an appearance as could well be imagined. They come into the town in families; half a dozen mules bearing the market produce are linked together. Ahead stalks the father and possibly eldest son, or maybe two sons, dressed and armed as I have described. The women follow with the children, carrying the very young ones in heavy-looking baskets upon their backs. They halt upon the grassy common outside the bazaar, where the animals are tethered under a tree, and proceed to unpack.

Skutari, of course, is the capital of Albania, and the diplomatic colony is therefore much in evidence. The embassies are outside the town and are the handsomest buildings to be seen. Austria and Italy have special political claims upon Skutari, and their embassies are very fine; there is also an Austrian and Italian post office, thus making three separate and distinct services. The stamps of the respective countries are used surcharged, of course, and by special and fervent advice we posted in the familiar yellow and black box of the Dual Empire, as, so we were told, the Turkish delivery, when it ever justifies that name, is often a question of months; as a matter of fact, our Austrian-posted letters took three or four days longer than those posted in Montenegro. The wealthier merchants, Moslem and Christian, live by the consular colony.

We had intended buying some mementoes, such as embroidery and jewellery, but were disappointed. Unfortunately *Ramadan* was not yet over, and the Moslem was tardy in opening his shop in the mornings, so that many were still tightly shuttered when the boat left next day. The explanation of this is that, as the Faithful allowed nothing to pass their throats from sunrise till sunset, they naturally made up for lost time by

ALBANIANS GUARDING THEIR PRODUCE IN THE MARKET OF SKUTARI

spending most of the night endeavouring to cram all the meals into themselves before the lord of day appears. It is strange how strict they are in regard to this rule. Even the cherished cigarette is forbidden ; some go to such lengths that they hold half a lemon before their mouths as they pass an unbeliever smoking, lest by mischance a whiff of second-hand smoke should be inadvertently inhaled, a misfortune that I fear no penance could compensate. We were warned not to puff cigarettes in the bazaar during the day, as this not unnaturally raises very bitter feelings in the hearts of the restricted ones, and has been known to result in bloodshed.

Sunset is announced by the firing of a cannon from the old Turkish castle above the harbour, and a few moments before the expected signal the famished followers of Mahommed may be seen eagerly fingering a carefully made cigarette, and holding ready a match or piece of glowing charcoal, they squat in expectant attitudes. The look of patient resignation they have worn all day has vanished, and before the last rumble of the explosion has died away hundreds of cigarettes are glowing and a merry chatter and bustle of shutting up has taken the place of the quiet that has reigned from sunrise. I knew the horror that the true believer had of the camera, but determined to see if a few photos of the bazaar could not be obtained. We were more than lucky, especially considering that it was so dark under the overhanging roofs that I had to give a half-second exposure. We had a little trouble, which we willingly put up with, knowing that the films had already been exposed.

Though we should like to have been able to spend a day or so here, it was impossible, and perhaps, after the open-air life we had been accustomed to, just as well. I am not one to complain unduly, but the sight of that bazaar, after its novelty has worn off, is more amusing

than healthy. However, I do not want to set myself up as an authority, and if our short visit has misled me, I can only apologise to Skutari for my remarks. But one thing that everyone who visits the place must acknowledge is, that to the student of pure Moslem and Albanian life and colour, and to the lover of the land of the Crescent in the Middle Ages, Skutari presents a field of unending attractions and leaves a series of impressions upon the mind which for these things alone are unique. It was with very mixed feelings, partly of regret but principally of thankfulness, that we watched the white specks and the towering brown castle sink into the surrounding mountains from the stern of the little steamer next morning.

ALBANIANS IN SKUTARI MARKET. GUN AND REVOLVER ALWAYS TO HAND

CHAPTER XVII

A SAD FAREWELL

LAST OF ALBANIA—INTERMINABLE JOURNEY—HEAVY STORM GATHERS—OUR ANXIETY TO REACH MERCÉDÈS —VIR—RACE WITH THE STORM-KING—WE WIN—POOR MERCÉDÈS—MONTENEGRO IS BLACK INDEED—LAST DAY IN CETINJE—MUTUAL REGRETS—LEAVING NEXT MORNING—NJEGUŠI—AUSTRIA IN SIGHT—OUR FAREWELL TO THE SONS OF THE CRNAGORA—CATTARO —ACROSS THE BOCCHE—FINAL GLIMPSE OF MONTENEGRO—RAGUSA.

WE left Skutari about half-past nine, and our hearts sank as we found that we had in tow five barges, almost as large as ourselves, and so heavily laden that each flat bow thrust a great wave before it. We made appallingly slow progress, and six hours had sped ere we reached Plavnica. I thought the journey would never end. The sun blazed down with intolerable force, and the clank-clank of the engine got at last upon our nerves. The surrounding hills looked almost white, as though bleached by the hot rays. Not a thing stirred; we were hardly travelling fast enough to put a match out. The group of dirty-looking Moslems, returning to Podgorica, lay at full length in the shadow of the hatches. Lunch was provided aboard; but having yesterday seen the dog kennel in which Marko had fondly hoped to prepare ours, we had wisely provided ourselves with a tin of biscuits,

potted ham, cheese and a bottle of St. Julien, which we thoroughly enjoyed under the awning. Coffee followed, and as the afternoon waned we were close into the Montenegran shore.

At Plavnica we exchanged the four barges and a band of Infidels for a group of Montenegrans. It was good to see the red and blue uniforms once more, and better still to recognise an officer whom we had met at Podgorica. Relieved of the dead weight, the little boat leaped forward joyously, and very soon we were enjoying the only cool breeze we had felt for weeks.

Pelicans are very common upon the lake and we saw several; one paddled quite near. Our Montenegran officer friend had joined us at the bow. Laughingly I pointed to the pelican, making the motion of shooting the great bird with a gun. Instantly I felt something heavy upon my knee, and the next moment I held a loaded revolver in my hand. The officer had pulled it from his belt and pressed it upon me. We were now some distance past the bird, but still within range. However, I had no wish to risk a chance shot and maybe only break a wing; besides, I knew that nothing on earth would induce the Italian skipper to give me a chance of killing the bird if I missed, so I handed the weapon back, much to its owner's surprise. I essayed to explain the cause, but, I am afraid, with poor results.

We are now under the shadow of the Black Mountains; they tower over our heads, naked, bleak and arid, and as we sat watching them grow from out of a haze till they reached their present size, we thought, for the first time, of the distance that lay between us and home.

Skutari was the turning-point of our tour; each day had seen us farther and farther to the south-east, till at last we had reached the uttermost end of motor-land. Civilised Europe ends here, roads are unheard of, and even upon horses one may not venture far into unruly

Albania. We were just a little sad as we realised how fast the time had passed, and as though in sympathy with our feelings a startling change had come over the summer afternoon.

With characteristic suddenness the land of the Black Mountain quickly justified its name: great masses of clouds appeared behind the Lovchen and thunder commenced a lively cannonade. Never have I witnessed a more threatening sky, and our anxiety was to reach Vir before the storm. We endured the half-hour's row from the steamer to the landing-place with stoical fortitude. How slow the boat was, and once when the unwashed oarsman in the stern suspended operations in order to roll himself a cigarette, Ken was, with difficulty, restrained from his declared intention of putting the grimy delinquent overboard. Each moment it grew darker. The thunder was by now incessant, so that we expected the storm to burst every second. Reaching the steps we bundled out; Rodgers met us, his usually smiling face rather anxious, an expression that was not entirely hidden by a three days' beard. We were all in a hurry to be off. Rodgers, who had expected us since one o'clock, had everything ready. We shook hands with our officer friend, and climbing to our seats, sailed majestically out of Vir Pazar.

I had made arrangements for Rodgers to sleep at the little inn during our absence, and the proprietor, who spoke broken American and fairly understood English, had promised to come for him. Whether or not he had met a few friends I never learnt; suffice it to say that Rodgers waited till dusk and, no one appearing, spent the remainder of the night in the tonneau, with the side curtains down. He was quite happy and would have enjoyed a good night's rest had it not been for the heat, the mosquitoes and the curiosity of numerous people who came during the early hours of the morning to

inspect the car and found, much to their embarrassment, that she was in perfectly safe keeping. He existed upon the ample provisions that remained over from Cattaro, and, for amusement, witnessed what he described as a very pretty fight among the rough workers in the yard during the morning.

As on our previous journey, we fought a battle with time; up the zigzag hill we climbed, over the bleak rocky ridge and down again to Rjeka. Meanwhile the air grew darker and the clouds, though now directly above our heads, never broke. It was positively uncanny the way the rain held off, and though the thunder boomed incessantly not a drop of water fell. Like a rocket we flashed through Rjeka, and for a fourth and last time commenced the wonderful path to the capital.

Behind and beneath us the lake and the Albanian Alps lay obscured by impenetrable clouds, and we pictured the little steamer groping its way back to Skutari. The air was now positively charged with electricity and very oppressive. We reached the summit clear of cloud. Beneath us, and blocking out that unequalled view, great masses of mist swirled. Without halting, we plunged down the five hundred feet and for a third time came into view of the red-roofed houses of the smallest capital of Europe. We drew up at the hotel door in record time, beating our previous journey from Rjeka by seven minutes.

Mercédès almost knew her way into the hotel yard, and scarcely had we lowered the curtains than the storm broke—*burst* would be a better term—a storm of such violence and fury that the little hotel rocked again. The streets were swept with the hurricane, while the thunder came in deafening claps and the lightning flashed incessantly, illuminating the darkness and throwing up vividly every house along the deserted street. We were standing at the hotel door, watching the storm, when a

FROM ITS EMINENCE THE OLD WALLS GAZE DOWN SLEEPILY UPON SKUTARI. (ALBANIA)

lightning flash revealed a two-horsed carriage galloping towards us a short distance away. A few minutes later it took form out of the blackness, illuminated by the flickering light of the hotel lamp. It was rather a ramshackle vehicle, with only a half-hood over the two back seats. A small bundle hopped stiffly out, followed by another closely veiled form. They hurried into the hotel and, as the manager waited expectantly, began to unwrap. A minute or two later their faces were visible. They proved to be a French couple, and this was their first introduction to Montenegro. They left at six next morning, and I have always felt I should like to hear the man's honest and unvarnished opinion of the Land of the Black Mountain.

Poor Mercédès, she stood alone through all the storm, wind-swept and rain-washed; warm in our cosy rooms, our hearts bled for her.

Sunday dawned, as did every day, bright and warm; the hills looked greyer if anything, and the air was delightfully crisp and clear. For the first time since leaving Ragusa we enjoyed a perfect rest. Every morning we had been called before six, so we determined to take advantage of Sunday and rest till eight o'clock; but, bless you, we were all stark, staring wideawake at sunrise and no effort could induce sleep. The sun glinting through the shutters finished our attempts, and by seven o'clock we were taking a gentle promenade as an inducement to breakfast. We were very thankful for that day; indeed, we all felt as though we had spent a fortnight upon the treadmill. Those who have toured much *en auto* know that after a week of long daily journeys it becomes imperative to take a day's rest, and in this case we had done nine days of perhaps the hardest motoring one will ever experience.

The visitor who comes to Cetinje during the absence of the Court finds the place deserted; the stately figures

in their blue, green and red, who perambulate all day long near the King's palace, no longer decorate the town. Only those whose duty keeps them in Cetinje remain ; the *élite* have followed their King, thus giving the place an air of desertion, which strikes the stranger, who has known it during the residence of the Court, with a desolate feeling of loneliness. But we were not inclined to be critical and were content to wander about and lounge the day away. In the afternoon we went the round bidding good-bye to the warm friends we had made.

I took Mercédès to the Government garage to obtain enough benzine to carry us to Ragusa, and found that the long-expected ship from Fiume had, in our absence, arrived and that the precious liquid was both plentiful and cheap. The man in charge of the store was a Bohemian and had spent some years in the Mercédès works. He was particularly interested in our journey to Kolašin, and when I told him how we had jacked the car out of the ditch he laughed heartily, explaining that upon the occasion Prince Danilo opened the road, three weeks ago, he had been at the wheel of the bus containing the royal luggage. He thinks he must have got about half-way up the great climb when the road collapsed and the heavily laden waggon dropped into a soft hole. It took a hundred men, he carefully explained, to pull the machine out, and the royal luggage finished its journey on the backs of mules.

Cetinje was no longer strange to us ; we felt our hearts warm to the little place. Mr. Ramadamavitch was good enough to express regret at our departure, and we took the opportunity of again thanking him for his kindness, which he made so light of. We should return again, we told him, and yet again, to his fascinating and hospitable country. Our regrets at having missed the King were mutual, and with cordial good-byes we finally parted.

Just before dinner Ken and I took a last farewell stroll through the town, and on our way back dropped into one of the tiny cafés that line the street. As we were leaving we encountered a plainly dressed officer at the doorway, who recognised us. He was what I think we should describe as Under Secretary to the Prime Minister and had been introduced to us before. With the delightful if embarrassing hospitality of his nation, he insisted upon our reseating ourselves at the table, and would take no denial. Though the ladies would be waiting it was impossible for us to stir, as such a move would be considered a grave insult. He was eager to hear more of our tour in the land and how the " permit " had answered, for he had worded it himself. We clinked glasses and drank the healths of our respective monarchs and countries, and it was with the greatest difficulty and only upon the plea of our starving wives that we were able at last to make a move. Never in all the world will the stranger find such wonderful and generous hospitality as among the true sons of open-hearted Montenegro.

Our better halves greeted our appearance with reproaches that would have caused a lord of the land grave doubts as to their sanity—a thing that both Ken and I seized upon as a defence, pointing out how well *we* treated them compared to others, an unfortunate remark that elicited the reminder that in twenty hours, or less, we should all be back under very different customs, and that they could remember one or two similarly unfortunate assertions we had been pleased to make during the last week.

Our last morning in Montenegro broke with undimmed splendour, and at nine o'clock we climbed into our seats. Mercédès was well known by now, and driving down the main street we had many farewells and good wishes to acknowledge. As we swiftly climbed up among the grey rocks we caught farewell glimpses of the white and red

houses, and beyond them the distant waters of the lake, still hazy with the morning mists. Our old friends, the Albanian Alps, stood out bright and clear, sending a farewell message to our hearts and an invitation to return again. Back we passed, ever climbing, till at length the parched landscape vanished, and rounding a turn we gazed down upon Njeguši and, beyond it, the great expanse of Adria. Sea, sky and grey rock all join together and form a picture never to be forgotten. Back through Njeguši, past King Nikolas' birthplace, past the Custom House and over the low hill, and at last we burst through the desert of rocks to where, three thousand feet directly beneath us, lay Cattaro and Austria.

Thus we left Montenegro. What can I tell you of the thoughts that surged through our hearts? We have toured through nigh a dozen countries, but never have we received so warm and hospitable a welcome. There was no false pride or suspicion in the minds of the people; we were taken straight to their hearts as friends; the poorest would give us all he had and starve if need be. We had seen a race of men who are men from their childhood, to whom honour is the greatest and most cherished of possessions, men who can look their King in the eyes without any feelings of inferiority, and who love him only for the nobility and good that is in him.

I feel sad now as I think of that morning when we bid good-bye, nay au revoir, for we shall return again, as must all who once gain a true insight into her secrets. Is it some strange fascination she possesses, some potent spell she casts over one, or is it only the deep love and respect she inspires in every heart by her centuries of honour and her brave struggle for existence in the face of such fearful odds? Farewell, then, thou little land! God grant your future may be as honourable and triumphant as your past, and may you ever live to do honour to the memories of those who have fought and died to

make you what you are—a nation! Though small may be your size, you have honour enough for the greatest; see you keep it as bright and unsullied as did those heroes from whom you have sprung.

. . . . . .

We drove down that marvellous road into Austria, down from the land of rocks that ten days ago looked so forbidding and awful, but which we now regarded as loyal friends. Quickly the star-shaped Bocche rose up to meet us; backwards and forwards we flashed, step by step, descending the giant staircase. First the fair Adria is lost to view, then the great bay of Teodo, and taking a last grand sweep, we fell rapidly towards the old castle that hangs over the town and seems, from below, as though it must fall every moment from its dizzy perch; Austrian soldiers, military waggons, cold grey forts, barbed-wire fences, and, alas! we are no longer looked upon as welcome guests, but are again under the suspicious eye of the most autocratic empire in the world. We drove into Cattaro in order to see if the Customs people required us, for we did not wish to have any bother and risk being detained a day or so. We halted Mercédès upon the quay close to the market, and while I went to the *douane* the ladies wandered among the Montenegran peasants and bought many kilos of luscious grapes. How strange it was to see their familiar figures, with their merchandise. They are no longer lords of all they survey; they are dangerous subjects, and as such are carefully watched by many uniforms. The belts of the men are void and their hands are for ever straying to the bulging emptiness. Sheila and Dorothy were so struck by their forlorn looks that they insisted on paying ridiculous prices for their purchases, leaving behind them wondering looks of gratitude and beaming faces.

"We had to," pleaded Sheila, in excuse; "it was our final farewell to her people. Besides, it is only a very small return for what we have received at their hands."

"What fine fellows the men are, and how lost they looked without their guns," Dorothy chimed in. "And what do you think, the women actually smiled, and they really can laugh! They laughed quite nicely when I fired off my Montenegran good-byes, *Dobro dan* and then *s'Bogom*. I feel as though I want to take a few of them home to England with me."

"Yes," drawled Ken; "there's rather a pretty girl over there, the one in the light blue. I think I should like to take her back."

"Oh, would you?" Dorothy interrupted. "By the way, you seem to forget you are again under civilised laws; and that reminds me, both Sheila and I have a few old scores to pay off."

Ken wisely changed the subject without loss of time and discussed other and less dangerous matters. The officer at the *douane* would not hear of examining either Mercédès or our baggage, but with an airy wave of his hand gave us permission to proceed. The heat was stifling, and even with the wind-screen up we could obtain but little relief. Back we passed, round the bay and through the merry villages, squeezing between the houses and seeming to accomplish the impossible. Though it was only eleven o'clock, we found the pontoon and naval launch waiting, and an hour later had crossed the Caterne. Luckily we had secured Mercédès very firmly to the pontoon, for the captain warned us that the large Austrian Lloyd steamer from Trieste was due any minute. With wedges under her wheels we lashed her fore and aft, until not a move could be got out of her. Half-way across we sighted the big steamer, which was steaming full speed and sending such waves astern

that we knew no ropes could hope to hold Mercédès. Ken pointed to the steam whistle, and the captain, pulling the cord, sent a warning to the big boat. The seventh attempt produced the desired effect and the heavy steamer slowed down to a crawl, the little figures upon her bridge doubtless murmuring unpleasant nothings at the delay. We were the objects of much curiosity upon the part of the passengers, who hid themselves behind binoculars or waved their handkerchiefs. Even though she had slowed down, waves caused us much anxiety, and the captain turned our nose full on them. The next two minutes were the longest I ever remember. Mercédès strained at her fastenings and managed to get an inch or so of play. A good wave, broadside on, would have sent her overboard, and we, watching her from the tug, held our breath and blessed the fact that we had a Government vessel, otherwise the irate officers upon the Austrian Lloyd might not have been so considerate. Many and varied were the expressions among the crew as to whether or not Mercédès would survive, till finally the waves subsided and we were once more puffing along upon an even keel.

It would be mere repetition to recall our journey back to Ragusa. Rewarding the willing crew, we severed the last link that bound us to Montenegro and followed the edge of the water, back past Sebenica and through noisy Castelnuovo, then over the sharp saddle, across the cruel stones, and halting for a moment, we caught a final glimpse of Montenegro. Behind us she rears a giant barrier across the horizon, and through our glasses we can just make out a faint streak, almost like a pattern, upon the steep slope. It is the great road down which we had passed a few short hours ago. Looking at it from here it is positively hard to realise that it is really a highway, for it is to the eye as a piece of cotton thrown carelessly upon a cushion. Ten yards farther Monte-

negro sank out of sight, and the only image that we possessed lay locked in our hearts.

I will draw a merciful veil over our journey back across the plateau of vines to the sparkling waters, high above Ragusa Vecchia; the final five hundred feet from Breno when the old walled citadel comes into view, perhaps the most beautiful and enchanting sight in all Dalmatia—with its massive war-honoured walls jutting far out into the blue expanse, as though striving to reach Lacroma, the isle of the Lion Heart.

We stayed a few days at Ragusa; Mercédès wanted a thorough overhaul, and I had sixty films to develop. I spent the best part of two nights hard at it, as I did not wish to risk the damp weather we might possibly encounter. In the afternoons we bathed in the blue water, remaining often for three hours or more, sometimes climbing up the jagged rocks and finding in some hollow little crystal pools left by the sea, warm as a hot bath, and where one might lie, lazily watching the long fringe of coast or the other bathers splashing upon the beach. And in the cool of the evening we would stroll through the ancient town and down to the moonlit sea.

At last we had to tear ourselves away. It was the beginning of October, and we had yet the Dalmatian Riviera to explore. Last year, when Sheila and I returned to Ragusa from Cetinje, we found the place in a state of excitement over the annexation. As we entered the town we met a large regiment of infantry, followed by a naval contingent with a 4.7 gun. They were marching briskly out of the south gate in a most business-like manner. I received a message at Ragusa, making it imperative that I should be home in three weeks, which, from where we were, meant heavy travelling. We could not head a straight course across the Alps, over the Gotthard, on account of snow and should have to travel via the Riviera. The roads in Dalmatia, we had been

warned, were bad beyond belief; however, it had been our fixed intention to return north by them. But Spalato, Zara, Fiume and Trieste meant time; we could not rush through them, it would be sacrilege, and, besides, it would be impossible to do it in the time upon unknown roads. By returning through Bosnia and Herzegovina, and cutting out Sarájevo, we were able to reach Agram in three days. First day we made Mostar, 135 miles; the next passed through the Narenta, and before reaching Kostajnica, turned to the left over the magnificent new road that crosses a grand mountain pass and joins the Jajce road at Vakuf-dl, on through Jajce to Banjaluka, a splendid run of 168 miles; next morning starting for Agram, 135 miles, and reaching it after fording a river. We had at first rather hesitated about taking this route, for the air was filled with wild rumours of insurrection; a tunnel had been smashed in here and a bridge wrecked there. I had an interview with the military commandant, and found him rather dubious; however, he said that Austrian troops held the country as far as Stolac. This was barely half-way to Mostar, and I remember how anxiously Sheila and I discussed the question. On one hand lay the uncertain roads of Dalmatia; upon the other, excellent roads and the risk of trouble. Eventually we chose the latter, and I recollect very vividly the morning we left Ragusa, knowing that before the day was out we might be in the midst of the insurgents.

However, we had either remarkable luck or else the trouble had been exaggerated. Austria evidently had carefully calculated the probable results of the step she was taking and prepared accordingly. Soldiers everywhere, even the railways were guarded, and once or twice we were stopped by patrols. We never witnessed an exciting incident, only watchful alertness. Looking back now, in cold blood, I should not care to do that journey again, but the promise of excitement and our

failure to get Mercédès to Montenegro undoubtedly prompted us to take that course.

Strolling through the quiet streets, Sheila and I often used to talk together of that morning, just a year ago, when we started out of Ragusa upon what might have proved rather a foolhardy journey.

We had now a month before us to spend upon the five hundred odd miles to Trieste and could revel in the dream cities of Adria at our leisure.

PART III

DALMATIA

"Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairily-delicate palaces shine,
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine."

TENNYSON.

CHAPTER XVIII

BESIDE THE BLUE WATERS

DRIVE ALONG THE DALMATIAN RIVIERA—THE ISLANDS OF ADRIA—THE GIANT OF CANNOSA—DESCENT TO THE FEVER MARSHES—METKOVIĆ—THE NARENTA—ROAD TO IMOSKI—DUST—MORE DUST—VALLEY OF THE CETTINA—SPALATO—THE BARON'S PREDICAMENT.

THE best way to reach Metković and Spalato is via Stolac and down the Narenta. There is another road, however, following the coast to Metković; this is usually avoided, as it is considered bad; but as we had passed through the Karst so often, we determined to give the coast a trial. Mr. Stillman, who travelled this way in 1876, says: "The journey by diligence from Ragusa to Metković is one that has a twofold interest. The tourist finds a succession of enchanting views, passages of rare picturesque material, little nooks of sea-coast, with fringes of plane, where the olive and vine flourish and the palm puts forward a claim to naturalisation, if not to utility; jutting crags of rock, headlands of massive limestone, where, with a good south-west wind blowing, the marine painter would find his best themes before him; an alternation of garden, desert and sea; the Adriatic with all its islands on the one side, and the grey bare range of mountains which forms the boundary between Dalmatia and European Turkey, full of exquisite hues and tints, on the other; and the road, following all the sinuosities of the

coast, making a whole of an attractiveness I have never seen surpassed."

It is indeed a dream drive, intermingled with a nightmare of a road. Leaving Gravosa, the beautiful seaport of Ragusa, we enter at once upon the journey ; the road is washed by the deep blue waters ; moreover, it is covered with sharp stones, that fly from beneath the wheels as we speed along. Rounding a bay, the road climbs up a steep hill, only to descend the next morning. Up and down we pass, often reaching an altitude of from 1000 to 1500 feet above the deep blue sea studded with islands, each in itself a miniature Garden of Eden.

Not far from Ragusa we pass through Cannosa by the cool waters. There is at Cannosa one of nature's greatest wonders, a giant plane-tree. Part of its branches overhang the road, and the first view we had of it came upon us with startling suddenness ; the branch that hung above our heads was quite sixty feet in length and thicker than the biggest oak in England. The trunk of this marvel is something between sixty and seventy feet round. It is perfectly ridiculous, when standing some distance away, to note the comparison between the people passing by the huge trunk. One feels little better than a pigmy, so utterly unproportionate is the comparison. The area sheltered by the leaves is something enormous : I should say quite 120 to 140 feet across, if not more. Mercédès looked like a child's toy left in some old garden ; she was dwarfed until we, at a distance, could scarcely realise that she had not shrunk almost to nothing from her original size. There is no record of the age of this marvellous tree ; since man trod this ground it has stood where it stands to-day. Without exception, it is the most stupendous tree I have ever seen in Europe, and it was some time before we could make up our minds to leave it. There is a small café by the roadside, and the proprietor serves refreshments beneath the green branches.

THE GIANT PLANE TREE AT CANNOSA. (DALMATIA)

Seated in the cool shade we drank coffee and discussed the marvel. Above our heads one huge branch sprouted out of the trunk ; it was quite fifty feet long, and must have weighed some tons.

We had lunched before leaving Ragusa and had yet a considerable way to go. We could easily have made Spalato in the one day with an early start ; however, we decided not to hurry, but to spend a night at Metković. Had our friend Count Caboga not left for Trieste the day we returned from Cetinje, he would doubtless have warned us about staying at Metković, but as no one had said much about the place beyond the fact that it possessed quite a good little inn, we had no excuse, save my own stupidity in not reading up Baedeker, for making Metković our stopping-place. I had not been using Baedeker for some time, as we had been upon familiar ground, and it was only now, sitting under the great tree, that I bethought me of my neglected little red-backed friend. I searched him out, and as though in revenge I read in reference to Metković : " The situation is unhealthy (fever) and travellers should avoid spending a night here." This was a nice recommendation, and we were half inclined to return to Ragusa, next morning making Spalato ; but were deterred for two reasons—first, we should have to traverse that bad road twice (this would mean Stolac and the loss of the islands) ; secondly, because it was against our fixed rules ever to turn back unless absolutely compelled to do so. Therefore, as we had stretched Fate rather much of late, we decided that a further pull would not strain her uncertain majesty overmuch.

The drive to Metković is beautiful beyond belief ; it is like traversing a fairyland ; the road is seldom level, but winds steeply up high upon the mountain-side and then by a capricious whim down again to the sea. As one climbs heavenward innumerable islands come into

view, little worlds of green upon an immensity of blue. As we pass up the coast the islands grow larger: we see Giuppanna; beyond that Meleda, an island of huge chasms and gloomy gorges. Almost upon the horizon was Lacosta, then the long peninsula of Sabbioncello, itself almost an island, and at its extremity Curzolo, a spot known to antiquity for its thick woods. It was here that in 1228 the Genoese captured those two famous Venetians, Marco Polo and Andrea Dandolo. In addition to that, Curzolo boasts that she alone in all Europe can show the jackal in its wild state. How these animals first made their home upon the island no one knows for certain: it is even rumoured that they were landed by the Venetians in order to destroy the flocks and so reduce the inhabitants to surrender. Indeed, you cannot find an island that does not at every turn bear the mark of Venice. The republic was supreme here; she built towns, churches and castles, and one could spend a summer flitting from island to island, ever discovering fresh beauties. Far out to sea, the most western of the archipelago, lies Lissa, a pilgrimage for every Britisher that comes this way, for many a hero of our own blood lies almost forgotten beneath the soil in the little English churchyard. There are but few lines given to this pathetic and lonely monument: "Here lie enclosed the remains of British seamen who lost their lives in defence of their King and country, MDCCCIV." Yet their remembrance still lives in the island; the forts may be dismantled, but their broken walls above "the English harbour" still bear the names of "King George," "Wellington" and "Bentinck." Napoleon had all but realised his ambition and England alone stood in his way. Lissa, as we gazed out to sea, was but a haze in the distance, seeming as though wishful to shade the honoured remains of her dead from the cheap glare of idle curiosity.

Upon the mainland, as upon the islands, each little

bay has its cluster of white houses; every scroll-work bears more or less the touch of Venice and the Winged Lion is supreme. The staple industry of the folk is sardine fishing; anchovies are also caught, salted and packed upon the shore.

For a short distance the road crosses a narrow finger of Herzegovina; it is quite good save for its terrible surface of stones and one hill, very short it is true, but unequalled for steepness, save those abnormal ones east of Sarájevo. It is amusing to contrast our journey with that of Mr. Stillman in 1876. Speaking of this finger of Herzegovina, he says: "We had to pass the strip of Turkish country at Klek, and here had another occasion to see the administrative incompetence of Turkish officials. The road is a good one both sides of this territory, but here falls off into indifference, and at one point we were obliged to get out and walk up a long, steep hill, while the diligence was drawn by half a dozen oxen, simply because the Porte, in its mere suspicion or intolerance of any change which would have made the road easy; . . . it was the desolation of Herzegovina, every house by the road being burnt."

We had lingered to watch the beautiful sunset. So enchanted were we with our drive that it was only when the light commenced to fail that we realised how foolish we had been not to have hurried more. We now commenced the long descent to the "fever" marshes at Metković. The road unfortunately edges the low swamp land for some ten miles, and here the dreaded malaria fiend holds court. It was his hour, the hour of sunset, and we sped onward with all haste. We could see the thick mists rising in deadly vapour from off the sodden waste.

Often in a long day's journey there is one incident or view, some expression or remark that stamps itself permanently upon the mind, remaining clear to the

memory long after the other thousand and one incidents have vanished into "the storied past." Of all that exquisite drive between Ragusa and Metković, the one view that is stamped upon my mind, and stamped indelibly, is the sunset over that death tract of marsh. Imagine a flat, dreary valley, surrounded by shadowy hills, where vegetation is rank and rotting, the sun vanished in a bed of mist, its ruddy light diffused, yet intensified in colour a hundredfold by the vapours, casting over all an angry light. It was the very home of desolation, of death, of rotting life. Fever was in the air. We could fancy we saw the fever spirits flitting through the mists. Ashboth writes of Metković: "The emaciated, yellow faces showed that it was not advisable to linger here, for the dangerous marsh fever, which may attack healthy new-comers and cause their death within six hours, is always rampant in this place."

Slowly the red glow vanished, only to be changed to silver, for the moon, a round ball of platinum, now cast its reflection upon the dull waters.

Metković, ever since the dead weight of Moslem rule was lifted, has grown year by year, until it is now a thriving little seaport upon the Narenta, some twenty miles below Mostar. Large ships can navigate the river and quite a respectable harbour has been formed. We had to light our lamps during the last two miles, so that upon reaching Metković we gathered the inhabitants around us much in the same way that the fishermen attract sardines by means of flaring lights. We certainly collected every soul in the place, and were somewhat excitedly led to the one and only hotel, very small, but quite clean. As for Mercédès, there was no shelter for her. Italian blood was rather too freely sprinkled among the quay loafers to think of leaving her in the street, and at last, after much bother, she was conducted about half a mile out of the town and left in an old stable-yard

belonging to the hotel, a malaria-proof ostler sleeping upon some straw beside her. On our way back to the hotel Ken and I called upon a chemist and found that he sold boxes of little cachets containing quinine as a regular trade; twelve in a box for one krone. We bought a box, and later in the evening distributed them among us. If good health and excellent spirits have any preventative qualities, we stand a very fair chance of avoiding malaria.

There is little to see in Metković. Under Austrian administration it has prospered well, the swift Narenta valley opening the way for the many exports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. From Metković to Spalato there are two roads: one passes through Imoski, where it takes a right-angle turn seaward, the other, though inland, is shorter and parallel with the coast. There is one steep hill upon this road, but for quality it is immensely superior in every way to that via Imoski. There was, of course, the usual busybody of the know-everything type; our chemist friend of the quinine-tablet fame was such, and on his grave assurance we let ourselves in for a road that would have made an angel swear or the imperturbable Mark Tapley tear his hair with vexation. "You will follow up the Narenta for six miles, then cross into Herzegovina and make for Imoski," he said, beaming upon us, and with many words of thanks that at a later date we longed to recall we passed out of Metković.

It is an easy road along the Narenta, and upon reaching the bridge we crossed the river. It seems strange to think that we are only twelve miles from Mostar, that this eddying water, barely an hour ago, flowed under the old dream bridge; we were half inclined to spend a night among the scenes we knew so well, but conquering this temptation, we turned our backs upon the ages-old river. Mr. Stillman speaks of the road and the scenes he witnessed, "every village by the

way, except one Turkish, being burnt or demolished, or both; scowling Bashi-bazooks along the way, in the hungry temper of mid-Ramadan, and we the only Christians in sight—the body of a dead Christian lay by the roadside; a Mussulman, who kept a raki-shop near by, had a few weeks before deliberately butchered and decapitated a Christian engaged in cultivating his maize field, not a word having passed between the murderer and his victim previous to the attack."

We are now again in Herzegovina, but a more fertile part than we have known up to now, the men and women dressed alike in long, coarse, white clothes, baggy trousers and shirt, bare arms and legs from the knees downward, the only distinction being that the men invariably wear red, twisted turbans upon their heads and the women white, stiff handkerchiefs. Times have indeed changed from those bad days. We had a most hearty reception from every peasant, Moslem and Christian, many rushing to the roadside from the fields of Indian corn in which they were working, waving their hands and shouting strange greetings. The road is an abomination, narrow, twisty and stony; so that we endured many ills, the crowning triumph of discomfiture being the dust. I do not know a road, either in Italy or Spain, that can compare to the Imoski road; inches, nay, half a foot deep it lay, rising from beneath the front wheels in two solid clouds; it was carried into the tonneau as though by invisible funnels; many times we had actually to stop and allow it to settle, for it was quite impossible to keep the eyes open, let alone to see. Our eyes, ears, noses and throats became filled, our faces, hair and clothes white as a miller's, giving us the appearance of an aged party of decrepit invalids. Rodgers looked anything between sixty and seventy; Sheila and Dorothy were coughing incessantly, but looked more enchanting, if that were possible, apparently having returned to the seventeenth

century and, as Ken said, "only wanting a couple of beauty patches to complete the picture."

In other countries the majority of the dust rises behind, not as here in front; if we lifted the wind-screen the dust blew straight into our faces like a sand-blast; if we lowered it, great clouds of white whirled round our heads and settled down our collars. Rodgers' legs were hidden up to the knee, and looking behind he could see nothing; but once, when climbing a long hill, we caught a glimpse of the twisty road beneath us, overhung by a long, sinuous, serpent-like cloud floating in the air, the line of dust stretching back for nearly a mile. Then the heat—heavens, what a heat! The sun blazed down from a sky of intense blue, not a drop of water refreshed the eye, not a lake or trickling stream, only the waving fields of maize and the grey mountains around.

Imoski is a small village far removed from the busy world, situated upon the summit of a cone-shaped hill; it stands some 1500 feet above the sea and is one of the coldest towns of Dalmatia, being open to the frequent attacks of the deadly Bora. There is nothing to remind the traveller of Turkish days; the mosques and Moslem houses had long been replaced by Christian buildings. Even the fine old castle that clings to the precipice edge and overhangs the Yasaro some six hundred feet beneath is but a mass of ruins that pathetically recall a lusty history. Duke Stephen of Saint Sava, the founder of Stepanograd, near Mostar, laid the first stone of the castle, but little is known of its exact history during the stormy centuries of Moslem invasion. Mocenigo captured it for Venice, who retained it under the Treaty of Passarovitz. Wilkinson relates how the Venetians delighted in forcing their captives to leap over the six-hundred-feet precipice, promising them liberty could they but cling to a tiny rock that projected some twenty-five feet beneath and in doing so to check their downward career. Many

endeavoured to avail themselves of this fiendish offer, but few, if any, ever succeeded in clinging to the fatal rock, being hurled outward, striking projection after projection, until they disappeared into the merciful waters below.

There is really no need to enter the town of Imoski, for the road branches to the left from the foot of the hill; however, we swept upwards and found ourselves upon the summit, five hundred feet above the flat land below, and while we argued the road, the crowd that had followed us from the foot of the climb arrived, greatly augmented and breathless, a few minutes later. Two Austrian policemen, the only European-clothed folk in the crowd, solemnly put us upon the right road, and answering their salutes we waded through the crowd back to the level of the plain.

We were now heading straight for the sea, presently joining the other road from Metković; save for two occasions when we had some little trouble with oxen carts, the journey was uneventful. Between us and the Adriatic stretches a range of low mountains, that would form an insurmountable barrier to further progress were it not for the River Cettina, which forces a way for itself to the sea, worming between the overhanging rocks. In many places the scenery is almost worthy of the Narenta. It was for this narrow defile that we were making, and just as afternoon was waning into evening we entered the valley of the Cettina. The twenty miles or so which remained was the one sweet pill of Fate; bad as had been our journey till now, we were more than repaid by the last hour and a half. First we strike a split in the rocks, where five hundred feet beneath we can hear the murmur of waters; it is the Cettina, which, like so many Herzegovinian rivers, emerges from some subterranean cavern; elsewhere it would be renowned, but here it is but one of the many mysteries of the Karst—witness those

we saw upon the great tableland of Gatsko, at Buna and at Trebinje. We descend in zigzags until we join the river and are in an impressive region; dark forests cover the lean sides of the mountains, sharp peaks, naked and bare, rise into the blue vault of heaven, the sound of rushing waters strikes pleasantly upon the ear. Again we descend by sharp zigzags, following the stream and often passing through thick woods, lose the water for a spell and climb some six hundred feet in three great arms, passing through a maze of rocks and tangled shrub, and at last emerge upon the left side of a huge ravine. Far below splashes and gambols the Cettina. Cautiously the road descends the precipitous hill-side, as though fearful of slipping; upon the zigzags we have to reverse in order to turn, but the road is excellent.

Upon the richly covered hills across the deep valley there once nestled a curious and interesting, though almost forgotten colony—the little republic of Poglizza, whose whole extent did not exceed forty square miles. During the stormy days of the civil wars, when Dalmatia was split into innumerable fractions, a small band of men established themselves upon the lower slopes of Mount Mossor; they were joined by many fugitives flying with their families before the Turkish conquest. Quickly they grew into a colony, spreading upon the lands below, and were recognised by Hungary, and later by Venice, in whose defence their men often enlisted. For nearly three hundred years this tiny state flourished, passing with varying fortunes through the troublous times of the Venetian-Hungarian struggles, till in 1807, like her greater sister Ragusa, she, too, was crushed by the remorseless power of Napoleon. Her cities destroyed, her lands devastated, her citizens persecuted, and the brave little republic of Poglizza had "ceased to exist"; another rotting skeleton to mark the path of the "children of Liberty."

Once again by the racing waters the gorge contracts, and we reach the most impressive scene of the whole passage. Here the Cettina forces its way between two huge rocks, some eight hundred feet high, bare, precipitous and threatening, seeming to deny the angry waters way. The road no longer plays capriciously with the Cettina ; instead, it is exceedingly glad of the aid of its powerful friend, and just manages to squeeze its way beneath the overhanging rocks. With a wide sweep to the right, the swirl of the torrent echoing in our ears, drowning the deep hum of Mercédès thrown back by the rocks, we are swept along ; there is no visible outlet, and we half fear some mystical cavern will open before us, swallowing river and Mercédès at a gulp ; but instead, the towering walls are suddenly split asunder, as though by a gigantic wedge, and the open Adriatic lies before us, its blue waters dotted with white sails twinkling in the sunshine like precious gems. As though angry at our escape the gorge has clenched its huge jaws behind us, and we marvel as we look in vain for the gap through which we have passed.

Dark as had been the gorge, it only served to throw up more vividly the gay scene around us, and though the sun was setting far out to sea we seemed to have gained quite two hours.

We are now close to the little town of Almissa, whose citizens so enraged the Venetians by their piratical infamies. So daring did they become that their atrocities have only an equal in those committed by the Uscocs ; even Hungary took action against them.

For centuries they were a pest to the whole Adriatic coast, despoiling the sacred persons of pilgrims bound for the Holy Land, as they did those of the rich merchants. So formidable were their depredations that Spalato, Trau and Sebenica forgot their differences and united for mutual protection. Unfortunately Almissa enjoyed the

patronage of the ill-famed Counts of Bribir, and at one time of the Duke of St. Sava. Captured by Stjepan Tvrtko of Bosnia, the town ultimately fell into the hands of Venice in 1420.

We now enjoy a run of some fourteen miles along a beautiful coast. To our left the blue waves roll lazily upon the beach, and a faint murmur whispers that the ever-restless sea sleeps but lightly. The sun, far down upon the horizon, hovers as though loath to take its glories from the scene.

The country is rich and fertile, rising gently upon the lower slopes of the mountains. Here are grown the black cherries from which is manufactured the world-famous maraschino of Zara, the staple industry of these parts. As the dying sun sinks into the burnished ocean we sight the wooded headland of Marjan, and the last home of Diocletian.

Spalato, as I shall have cause to illustrate, possesses perhaps the most intricate maze of narrow streets it is possible to find, the whole town being built within the walls of a Roman emperor's palace. A French friend of ours had earlier in the summer motored as far as Ragusa and back along the coast, and warned us not to attempt to take Mercédès into the town. He very kindly gave me an introduction to a friend of his, a doctor, whose house is just without the walls, and who would allow Mercédès to stand in his garden while we stayed at Spalato.

I have since heard my friend's account of his first entrance into the palace of Diocletian, and it is well worthy of recounting. I can vouch for its truth, for upon looking at the spot I have seen where he carried away a goodly piece of fancy scroll-work and marked a stone pedestal.

However, to begin at the beginning. The Baron was driving a light 15 h.p. Panhard. In many villages in

Spain and Italy one comes upon villages whose streets are entirely composed of narrow ways ; often there are but a few inches to spare between the mudguards and the houses, and one has to wait till the barrels, the stalls of fruit, raisins and grain are cleared before it is possible to proceed ; therefore the Baron hesitated not, but thinking that something of the kind was before him, plunged beneath the archway and into the narrow street. All went well for a minute or two, though the street ever narrowed ; yet there was at least two or three inches to spare, and when the divers obstacles before the shops were removed, he was able to move forward. Fate, however, played him a scurvy trick. To his dismay he came to a sharp right-angle bend, where the street was crossed by another one, and endeavouring to turn the corner, his car stuck fast, absolutely immovable; in fact, from that moment it became a fixture. Anyone who has toured in places where Italian blood is mingled among the populace will readily realise what a crowd had collected by this time, or rather two crowds, for there was no room to pass the auto, and he had driven one crowd before him and the other followed jubilantly in the rear.

Everybody within Diocletian's palace, or within hearing distance, who was not absolutely paralysed arrived upon the scene ; never before had there been so many people desirous of passing. It was immense. As he stood up in his car the Baron could look down three lanes of excited heads, calling out to him to move. One man, indeed, was in such a hurry that he climbed over the car, and another man loudly offered the information that the Baron was doing it for a wager. On the left was a pastry-cook's shop, whose doorway was blocked by the step, and wherein six frantic females, unable to get out, were having six different kinds of fits, to the delight of the crowd ; from the other side came the injured voice of a *coiffeur*,

whose two customers, shaven and shorn, desired much to leave and to attend to their business elsewhere, but were prevented by the other side step. Two gendarmes struggled through the crowd, and at last forced themselves to the car and called, in the name of the Dual Empire, upon the Baron to move.

The Baron said he only wished he could.

Backwards and forwards it was the same; if the houses had been built round the car with the one object in view of walling it up, they could not have accomplished it more effectively. The six females in the confectioner's, after becoming hysterical, had relapsed into faints with occasional spasms, and the *coiffeur* more mournfully aggressive; the two gendarmes were incensed at their fast-vanishing dignity, while the crowd was delightfully hilarious and thoroughly enjoyed the novel situation. The Baron looked first at the crowd, in three directions, then at the pastry-cook's, the *coiffeur* and the two gendarmes, finally subsiding upon the front seat helpless with laughter. "You must move the auto," roared the gendarme, shaking the tonneau violently. "Move!" gurgled the Baron, "move! Suppose you try and do a bit of moving," and he again lapsed into uncontrollable mirth. For the better part of an hour he held much-disputed possession of the three roads, and finally ten men were requisitioned to lift the back portion of the car into line with the long street, a feat at last accomplished, though not without some damage being done to the ornaments of the two shops. Some fifty yards of narrow street afforded the Baron further amusement, and it was only with the loss of two wooden cornices and a small pillar from the houses that he finally burst with his escort into the small square before the hotel, overwhelming the visitors sitting by the small tables before the café with the multitude and creating the impression that the place had risen in riot. An easier exit was found

which, though very narrow, was free of corners, and under police escort the first auto was conducted out of the imperial palace of Diocletian. He then used his friend's garden as a garage, and it was under the same palm-tree that we finally brought Mercédès to rest and had our luggage carried by porters to the little hotel in the square, the very one that the Baron had so successfully stormed.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ABODE OF AGES PAST

SPALATO TO-DAY—FASCINATION OF DIOCLETIAN'S PALACE —THE DUOMO—ASCENT OF THE CAMPANILE—PROFESSOR BULIC—ROMAN SALONA—EN ROUTE FOR TRAU —RIVIERA DEI CASTELLI—TRAU—UNDER THE RULE OF THE WINGED LION—SUNSET.

IT is not my intention to describe in detail the wonders of Spalato; one has only to refer to any of the numerous works published to obtain endless descriptions of her countless treasures. Spalato to-day presents an almost unique combination of ancient and medieval art; Roman gateways, pillars, arches, frescoes and temples delight the eye; look where you will your enraptured gaze will rest upon some beautiful scroll-work or noble capital, while the ear is soothed by the softest of Italian speech. And as you thread your way through the narrow crowded streets, where houses almost touch each other, know that you are actually within the heart of an emperor's palace.

The history of the foundation of Spalato is very typical of these changeable lands. About the end of the second century, when Rome was still mistress of the greater part of what was then the world, the whole of Illyria, as will be remembered, lay subject to her will; and along the coast she controlled three great seaports, Jadera (Zara), Epidarus (Ragusa) and Salona. The greatest of these was Salona, whose ruins to-day lie but

a few miles from Spalato, upon a beautiful bay. At that time Spalato was but a rocky promontory thrust out into the blue Adria and sheltering the imperial galleys in the harbour of Salona. For fifty years the Roman Empire had been steadily rotting away; emperor succeeded emperor, only to add disaster upon disaster; arts, sciences, literature all waned until Diocletian, a native of Dalmatia, was chosen emperor. He it was who first divided the Eastern and Western Empire, residing at Nicomedia; while his appointed colleague, Maximian, governed the Western half. His reign has nothing whatever to do with the history of Spalato, until failing health forced him to renounce the purple; wisely abdicating, in 313, in favour of Constantine Chlorus, he retired to his native land to end his few remaining years. Salona he chose as his place of retirement, and so charmed was he with the beautiful rocky promontory that he commanded to be built for him a palace that should rival Nero's "golden house." Swarms of workmen must have laboured to accomplish the imperial will, for the size of the place is stupendous. In the form of a parallelogram, two sides are no less than 698 feet in length and the remaining two 592 feet.[1] The walls are gigantic, almost inconceivable in thickness and grandeur; but, alas! the true genius of architecture and sculpture had vanished, so that one misses much of the divine inspiration that earlier palaces still show.

Quickly the barren brown rocks disappeared and day by day rose the fairy castle, till at length Diocletian's palace stood ready. For nine years the Emperor was permitted to enjoy his beautiful home. Unlike his friend Maximian, he never attempted to regain his power, though he witnessed the growing importance of the Christians, whom he had so cruelly persecuted. He was, like the old Viking of the story, true to the ancient

[1] Adam, *Ruins of the Palace of Diocletian at Spalato.* 1764.

gods, rearing temples to Jupiter and Esculapius in the heart of his palace. So he died in his bed, a most rare death in those stormy days, surrounded by perfect peace.

After his burial the palace remained unoccupied, only the great suites of rooms were reserved for state visitors, while the remainder were used as a cloth factory for the troops. So matters drifted on for over three hundred years, till, in 639, came the invasion of the Avars and Slavs, who in one huge wave swept from existence the work of centuries, stamping flat the great cities of the coast. Salona especially suffered. Those of her people who escaped massacre sought shelter indiscriminately along the coast; some ventured south and helped to found the Ragusa of to-day, but the majority, bethinking themselves of the strong walls of Diocletian's palace, established themselves therein and quickly transformed it into a powerful citadel. Refugees flocked thither, so that in a comparatively short time they gained such strength as to be in a position to defy their enemies and form a miniature republic of their own. Building their houses inside the four outer walls, year by year, they reared in time a city. Built for defence, they could turn every face to the enemy, and to-day one can realise very vividly how perfect must have been their citadel.

The subsequent history of Spalato is typical of all the other coast towns: her inhabitants fought and quarrelled and in the middle centuries fell under Venetian rule. The great republic has left its stamp indelibly upon every gateway and building, casting a refining influence over the old rough outlines. After falling into Infidel hands they were restored to the Christians, and to-day take their place as citizens of the Dual Empire. Thus was founded Spalato, in the heart of Diocletian's palace.

As may be easily imagined, Spalato of to-day presents an enchanting maze of narrow alleys, whose houses

almost touch, and as you walk along you may rest a hand upon either wall of the street at the same time. Now and then you come upon some open space crowded with gay life, such as that one near to the harbour, where the fruit market is held ; the background is formed by Diocletian's great walls before which rises a round Venetian watch tower, perfect in every detail, and displaying to her subjects the emblem of her majesty, the wingéd lion. Beneath the honoured walls there moves a blaze of colour, for here is exhibited upon countless stalls the vegetables and fruits of a luxuriant province. Enchanting to the last degree is this scene : red twisted turbans, dark faces and eyes, short dark serge jackets and long trousers trimmed with braid, split from the knees downwards to exhibit brilliant stockings and hide shoes. Many wear the tiniest of tiny round flat caps, smaller than a saucer, balanced upon the very top of the head and held thereon by an elastic band. A blue tassel hangs over one ear, completing a most ludicrous appearance when compared with the tanned Slav features beneath. The women too are very picturesque ; each village has its different style, as do the married and single women of each separate village. Altogether it is an enchanting sight, the solemn tower speaking of a bygone age, the sky an intense blue ; the clash of tongues and the dazzling colours, such that one is half glad, half sorry to plunge again into the cool and narrow ways.

Of all the ancient edifices, I think the duomo is perhaps the most interesting ; there are many ways of reaching it ; whichever one you take you will discover something fresh : a doorway here, a hidden capital there, or in some darkened side-path a beautiful scroll-fresco built in a modern house ; often a mean garret possesses a Venetian balcony that forces one to trespass into some palm-shaded garden to examine it. Sometimes you will find yourself in the underground-way leading to the state

apartments of Diocletian. It is a low-roofed passage, not unlike those of Nero's palace on the Palatine. Here the modern city is hidden, the hum of civilisation hardly echoes and you are passing over the very stones that Diocletian trod seventeen centuries before. Forgotten is the busy world without, and you may dream of those great days till some Spalatian message-boy, as in the unromantic character of message-boys from time immemorial, appears through some Roman archway whistling the latest air. At one end of this vault stands the temple of Jupiter, now the cathedral. The way leads between narrow walls, and before you quite realise it you are in the midst of a row of beautiful Corinthian columns, for the doorway is overshadowed by houses, so valuable is space. The interior is specially interesting; after the Pantheon of Rome, it has no rival in the world. In shape it is circular and the roof is of red tiles.

We used often to pass an hour listening to the services. The change from the dazzling sunshine to the inky blackness of the interior is at first rather disconcerting; we brush past a heavy leather curtain, which falls-to behind us, and we are in absolute darkness. Men's voices are chanting a noble Latin psalm; the sound is collected in the domed roof and echoed with renewed strength till it seems to come from every side. Presently the eyes grow accustomed and a faint light comes from the right, showing a modern altar built into a side chapel, and we commence to grope our way to a seat. A carefully modulated grumble comes from an old beggar woman, whose legs we have tripped over. Her body is hidden by a notch in the wall and only a pair of very skinny extremities protrude. The habitués know the old lady well and her love of that particular place. Everyone stepped with great care over her appendages, and I verily believe if she were absent one and all would

involuntarily step over the spot where her legs should have been.

Swept bare of its modern fittings we have the temple of Jupiter and the emblem of Diocletian. In strange contrast to the wooden pews, choir-stalls and Gothic chapels is the ancient frieze which runs round the top of the walls. It is a hunting scene. Naked Cupids on horseback and on foot are mingled with stags, the whole dedicated to Diana, a beautiful pagan example, pagan in form, design and dedication, and one can only be thankful that the early Christian fanatics did not serve it as they did San Donato at Zara. But even before one commences to appreciate the general design, it is the beautiful pulpit alone that attracts and holds the eye. Jackson says that there is nothing in Romanesque art to surpass it. It is composed of limestone and marble of various tints, and its beauties cannot be exaggerated ; standing upon six Corinthian columns it forms a monument perfect in every detail.

I had always longed to see the cathedral of Spalato, from its associations with the brilliant tragic figure of de Dominis, its famous archbishop. There are few lives so deeply interesting as his, few men so strong, yet, alas! so weak ; few ends so pathetic. His story is well known, yet I may be forgiven if I recall it. Mark Antony de Dominis was born in Arbe, of a family long associated with the Church. He was educated in a Jesuit college, from which he was expelled. His rise to power was swift. In Padua he occupied a chair of philosophy, and Newton, in his *Optics*, acknowledges de Dominis as the discoverer of the colour of the iris. His intellect was abnormal, his talents unsurpassable, his courage unquestionable. He became Bishop of Senga (Zengg), and for several years was the spiritual and temporal ruler of that nest of infamous pirates. From Senga he became Primate of all Dalmatia and Archbishop of Spalato. For fourteen

THE EXQUISITE PULPIT OF THE DUOMO, SPALATO. (DALMATIA)

years, 1602–16, he held this position, carrying matters with a high hand, brooking no interference, intolerant of opposition and strong in his endeavours to purify the Church of Rome. When the great plague of 1607 broke out in Spalato de Dominis distinguished himself by dauntless bravery, but his efforts at Church reform proved his undoing. A violent quarrel ensued, and even the Pope himself was forced to cope with the fiery demands of de Dominis, who, despairing of gaining justice, resigned his position and determined to retire to a Protestant country. After spending some little time in Germany he journeyed to England.

In England he desired to enter the English Church and was welcomed with open arms ; in St. Paul's Cathedral an extraordinary scene took place when an Archbishop of Rome publicly renounced his Church. As Dean of Windsor and Master of the Savoy, de Dominis continued to seek the ideal, finding to his sorrow many glaring abuses that he endeavoured to reform. Bitter conflict followed and de Dominis was forced to renounce the Church of England. Writing to Pope Gregory XV, once a personal friend, he begged permission to re-enter the Church of Rome and to end his days in the Eternal City. This request the Pope granted, and as a poor old man, broken in health, destitute of friends, full of disappointed hope and unrealised ideals, de Dominis lived quietly in Rome until the death of Pope Gregory. Pope Urban VIII bore no love for de Dominis, who was accused of holding intercourse with heretics, and after being questioned by the Inquisition, vanished within the strong walls of St. Angelo in 1625.

Sitting beneath the beautiful pulpit, our minds revert to this sad story. Outside the cathedral the sun shines down upon the old walls with dazzling force, but within the old temple of Jupiter the air is heavy, voices are hushed, and a great sadness steals into the heart as one

dreams over the life story of that brilliant, rash, noble idealist who sought to find perfections and, in failing, triumphed.

The baptistery, once the temple of Esculapius, is another excellent example of Diocletian's age—but I must not let my enthusiasm override my determination to leave these descriptions in the many more capable hands that have written of and loved them so well. There is, however, one monument that has for the last quarter of a century been hidden from sight and of which I may speak. It is the medieval campanile that rises beside the duomo. For twenty years it has been hidden by unsightly scaffolding. Writers for a score of years have deplored the fact that its phenomenal wonders are hidden from view. Visitors innumerable have gazed at the wooden structure, while the elderly population of Spalato has almost forgotten what it looked like, and the younger generation know it only as a huge wooden packing-case on end, rising from amidst the houses.

The Rev. J. M. Neale [1] describes it before its restoration and says: "The Campanile, of one hundred and seventy-three feet in height, is one of the noblest erections of the kind that I ever yet saw . . . no words can give an idea of the exquisite system of panel shafting from apex to lowest stage; the shafts, usually speaking, circular, with square bases and Corinthianising caps."

Mr. A. A. Paton, who stayed at Spalato in 1847, eulogises the campanile, saying that "it is the lightest and airiest thing imagination can conceive and transcends every other similar edifice in Italy."

It is now, to all intents and purposes, quite finished save for some twenty feet of scaffolding round its base, and the result is dazzling. Snowy white it stands, not unlike the leaning tower of Pisa, only infinitely more delicate, a mass of slender columns, tier upon tier,

[1] *A Tour in Dalmatia*, etc. London, 1857.

gradually lessening in size. By special permission we were allowed to ascend, under escort, to the very summit. Every detail of the original design has been faithfully preserved. First we enter a tiny stone doorway, barely two feet wide and very low in one base, not unlike the entrance to many an Egyptian tomb; a flight of stone steps, very high and very steep, is cut in the thick stone, and we ascend some thirty feet by as many steps in complete darkness. At last we emerge into the sunshine and find we are upon the first tier. A pleasant breeze is blowing from off the blue expanse, and we are just a trifle above the level of the surrounding roofs. An iron stairway, cunningly hidden by the stone-work from below, now carries us from floor to floor. Marvelling at the delicacy of the columns and the exquisite design, we mount steadily, until finally we reach the highest point, a miniature temple of Vesta—a marble floor and roof held apart by a circle of beautiful Corinthian columns.

The vista is magnificent. Around and beneath us lies Spalato; we are in the centre of the four great walls, whose ancient stones we can trace unbroken. We see the different monuments, the duomo, baptistery, rotunda, and old Venetian tower. To the south the jagged wall of the palace is upon the modern quay. The harbour is filled with many flat-bottomed boats laden with fruit, some yellow and gold with oranges, others laden with green figs, pears or peaches, and some are weighed down to the water's edge by luscious grapes. An army of men and mules moves backwards and forwards, looking like gaily coloured ants, and beyond them the blue haze of the sea meets the deep lapis-lazuli of the heavens. To the right stretches the promontory of Marjan, beautifully wooded, its brown rocks washed by the cool waters. Further on we gaze at the Riviera of the Seventeen Castles, towards Trau. Five we can count—five little clusters of cottages amidst the luxurious growth. Inland, around

the promontory, the sea sweeps into a wide bay, washing the very ruins of Salona. Salona of the ancients, the pride of Rome, faithful to Cæsar, besieged by Octavius (Pompey's general), dear to Diocletian, she wraps herself in mystery, enchanted by her untimely fate. To the south we can follow the coast ; far away lies Ragusa, only a dream city to us now, and we can just discern the dark rocks through whose midst the Cettina forced for us a passage.

For an hour or more we remained upon the summit, discovering one beautiful view after another, returning to old favourites again and again, till at last we had to tear ourselves away. At the foot of the campanile rests a red granite sphinx that once crouched beside the silvery Nile, surrounded by scaffolding, and amidst the noise of stone chiselling it seems to be ruminating with lofty disdain upon the evil times into which it has fallen.

What splendid days those were, spent in Spalato—I do not compare them with those passed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, much less Montenegro—and their very restfulness was perhaps their greatest charm ; the Porta Aurea (Golden Gate), Porta Argenta and Porta Nova, are all links with the past. Truly Spalato has a charm of her own.

We had an introduction to Professor Bulic, to whom is due the entire credit for the excavations of Salona. For twenty-seven years he has devoted his life to the work, which has truly been a labour of love ; he loves every stone of the old ruins, and his archæological museum at Spalato is a bewildering maze of choice relics.

He can pick up any one of the many thousand fragments and discourse upon it for hours ; early Christian and Roman weapons, utensils, rings, bracelets, each has its appointed place in his heart, while amidst the crumbling walls of Salona he has built such a house that one might seek in vain for a rival. He very kindly invited

PROFESSOR BULIC'S HOME, SALONA. DALMATIA

us thither, and one fresh morning we started in Mercédès to spend a day among the ruins. I will not attempt to describe our wanderings or his wonderful home—it would take up too much space and may be read elsewhere —only that he has built his home entirely of stones of ancient Salona; one room is in the early Christian style, the design being carried true to every detail and only material of that period being used. It is very weird and very uncomfortable. Professor Bulic showed us, with much pride, a fine sarcophagus he had lately unearthed, and which he had set aside as his last resting-place, so that even death should not part him from his beloved treasures. One gets quite enthusiastic as he describes his labours, and it is almost like waking from a dream to find oneself back among dear old nineteenth-century folk again.

The origin of Salona is wrapped in mystery, though there is evidence that during the Trojan Wars the city sent galleys to assist the Greeks. Salona was captured by Rome in 117 B.C., and twenty years after was selected as the capital of all Dalmatia.

Espousing the cause of Cæsar against Pompey, it was besieged by Octavius. Henceforth its history is much akin to the history of the other Roman cities; with fluctuating success it fought its way up to the middle of the sixth century. Diocletian lavished much interest and wealth upon its palaces and fortifications, but after his death the fortunes of the city declined. We read of many sieges, some of them successful, to which it was subjected by the Barbarians, being finally rased to the ground by the Avars in 639, its degenerated inhabitants murdered or driven to take shelter where they could, its splendid palaces and noble harbour utterly destroyed. Thus ends the history of Salona, capital of Roman Dalmatia and the home of Diocletian.

Another enjoyable day was a drive to Trau and back

along the Riviera of the Seventeen Castles. The way lies through miles of vineyards, and my most vivid recollection was the suffocating dust and the unbearable glare of the sun. From the sea there rises inland a huge barrier of wild and desolate mountains, the Kosjak; between the sea and their base vegetation is almost tropical, for one is really in a gigantic oven formed by nature. Not a breeze can reach the spot save from the sea; the sun's rays are reflected off the bleak rocks that tower behind, so that one is almost cooked. But the dust, ah, the dust! Four inches deep it lay upon the road, and both front wheels raised it in clouds that were carried right into the tonneau. In a few minutes we were white all over, our ears, noses, eyes and hair; upon our return to Spalato we had to bathe and change every garment before we could free ourselves of it. Wrapping up was quite useless, and at last we resigned ourselves to the inevitable and tried to admire the scenery as much as our smarting eyes would allow. We retain only a vague idea of the road, just an ordinary sort of road, very twisty, and covered with wine-carts drawn by stupid mules, while the heat was so great as to blister the paint and melt the rubber bulbs of the horns.

So luxurious has this strip of land been from time immemorial that the Venetians were forced to build seventeen huge castles as a protection against the wild Corsairs and Turks; to-day only seven remain, each surrounded by a cluster of small houses, hence the name of Riviera dei Castelli.

It was eleven o'clock when we came in sight of old walled Trau, the Tragurium of the Romans, standing upon an island, or rather a peninsula that has been transformed into an island by a deep fosse. It is connected with the island of Búa by a bridge—Búa, the ancient Boas, used by Rome as a place of exile. We skirted the old walls, seeking entrance, and eventually

UNDER THE RULE OF THE WINGED LION. TRAU. (DALMATIA)

drew up under the shade of the old Venetian watch-tower by the smiling waters. Endeavouring to shake off as much dust as possible, we made our way on foot to seek an entrance for Mercédès, and at last discovered one that led through a narrow street into the open square before the beautiful cathedral. Trau is perhaps the most perfect example of a town under the Venetian Republic extant to-day. Nothing seems to have changed since the middle centuries save, of course, the dress of the people; the very buildings themselves have remained unaltered, and one may gain a wonderful idea of the complete architecture of the Middle Ages. The cathedral, with its exquisite west doorway, that nothing can surpass in design and richness; the interior might fill a volume, as might the treasures of its sacristy. I dare not let myself attempt their enumeration lest I forget time, space and all the limitations that confine me.

Little is known of the foundation of Trau, though it traces its existence back to Roman days. In the twelfth century it was besieged by the Tartars; in the thirteenth it became a republic, waging a disastrous war with Spalato, until the Moslem conquest bound them together against the common enemy. The fear of the Turk was chiefly responsible for the opening of its gates to Venice, and from that time onward they lived under the rule of the Wingéd Lion, and after the downfall of Venice for a time passed into the hands of the French, finally, in 1813, being occupied by Austria. Here was born, in 1679, Giovanni Lucia, the great historian of Dalmatia, and many other famous men sprang from this noble city.

How beautiful is the loggia upon the opposite side of the piazza; here was the place of trial and execution, here upon the white flags; and, indeed, the scene is so real that one involuntarily looks round as though half expectant to see the procession of Venetian judges

arriving to form the last court of appeal. We spent nearly five hours in Trau, charmed beyond means to express, and the sun was dying far out upon the horizon as we commenced the journey back to Spalato.

As we crossed the bridge to the mainland we looked back: the white campanile was white no longer, but black as ink, silhouetted with the jagged outlines of the walled town against a background of gold. It was a last impression, stamped indelibly upon our minds, of that still perfect, medieval, wonderful and enchanting old republic of Trau.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST OF DALMATIA

WONDERFUL RUN TO ZARA—OLD CLISSA—ITS HONOURED MEMORIES—KNIN—AN UNEXPECTED TREAT—GATHERING OF THE MORLACCI—GORGEOUS SCENES—ZARA—ROMAN—MEDIEVAL—MODERN—SAN DONATO—CATHEDRAL—A LOVING HUSBAND—PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

TO reach Zara, one may journey by two routes; the shortest passes along the coast, via Trau, and Sebenica. But this road, we were told, is crossed by a ferry of which the boat was small and quite inadequate to hold Mercédès. Our friend the Baron passed over on this boat, and from his subsequent account it seemed quite large enough. However, we were not going to ask for risks, so determined upon the second and longer way, by climbing over the Kosjak Mountains and heading straight inland some sixty miles to the historic old town of Knin, thence at right angles a further seventy miles back to the coast at Zara. Throughout Dalmatia there is no road so fine as this, with its thousand changes, its excellent condition and the charming scenes that for ever pass before the eye. The total distance is something like 132 miles, which we accomplished in six hours, that is, adding the one hour for lunch, seven in all. We did not hurry upon the morning of our departure from Spalato, but nine o'clock saw us leaving the old walls of Diocletian's palace, and

five minutes later we were passing through the crumbling ruins of Salona.

Now commenced a climb of some 1500 feet, the road rising in great loops from the rich vineyards to the barren summits. Quickly the vegetation changes, the vines vanish and plants of a more northern clime appear; beneath, the sea-coast spreads itself out, Salona takes shape as does Spalato, with the beautiful rocky Majan to the right. Quickly we ascend. Mercédès is taking the gradient upon her third, and the road is spurned from beneath the wheels; the wind-screen is up and the breeze blowing in our faces, inexpressibly refreshing after our experiences *en route* for Trau. Almost upon the highest point we reach the battered castle of Clissa, whose historical old walls have a particular interest, and must not be passed without a few words.

> "The tower by war or tempest bent,
> While yet may frown one battlement,
> Demands and daunts the stranger's eye;
> Each weird arch, and pillar lone,
> Pleads haughtily for glories gone."

From her lofty position, Clissa commands an enchanting view; yet this beautiful panorama has for centuries seen the shedding of blood, and the roar of battle and death have disturbed the drowsy air. Look again, from the ocean beneath back to the dark, moss-grown walls, and if you will your ears may listen to tales innumerable of war and siege, of merciless foes without, brave hearts within, tales of wild forays, of parties returning pursued to the very gateway. Long ages past, almost in the dawn of history, this spot gained a reputation, chiefly on account of its unassailable position and its close proximity to the fertile land beneath, being captured from the Romans by the Avars in 639, previous to their attack upon Salona. The old castle of Kliss, as it was first known, was held by wild Croatia, who fought

fiercely to retain it. One can almost fancy the savage-dressed figures upon the walls, how they first saw the fleets of Venice in the distance, how the great republic seized Spalato and cast an envious eye up to lofty Clissa. In vain the defenders fought—the Queen of the Adriatic was at the height of her power, and we next see that the banner of St. Mark is above the massive tower and that the hot breeze scarcely stirs its huge folds. Then comes the great wave of Moslem invasion. That keen fighting race, the Uscocs, retreating before the foe, established themselves at Clissa, receiving help from Ferdinand of Hungary and Pope Paul V. Under the command of a Hungarian nobleman they made such fierce raids upon the Turks and exacted such reprisals that the Moslem, enraged at being defied so successfully, sent an irresistible force against Clissa, and taking the old castle after a year's hard siege, put the defenders to the sword. So the Infidel flag replaced the Christian. Not long, however, does the Star and Crescent wave over Clissa; Venice recaptures her from the Moslem, and holds the rocky eminence until her own fall. Napoleon includes Clissa with Ragusa, in his Illyrian kingdom, and so brings England to the scene in the person of Admiral Hoste, who demands and obtains the surrender of Clissa by her French defenders.

What a varied fortune was that of the old walls that now stand rotting beneath a pitiless sun; think of the strange procession of owners, who have each in turn lived, fought and died behind those battlements. Where are the lusty sons of those many races and creeds, the stalwart Romans, the savage Avars, the wild Croatians of the early centuries, the polished Venetians of the Middle Ages, the revengeful Uscocs, the turbaned Moslems flushed with their triumph, the ragged army of France and that indomitable figure in grey, those old British war-dogs with their great expanse of white

canvas (one can fancy their ghosts haunting the Bay of Salona), their ports open and the sunshine glinting off the polished sides of their carronade? Where are they now? See how the old walls are broken, their narrow windows filled with rank weeds, their brave defenders dead and forgotten! Love, hate, revenge have run riot here, and death comes last of all, sweeping them from existence and leaving behind—desolation. Yet death can never obliterate their memory or the tales of their warlike deeds; every deserted bastion to the sympathetic ear calls aloud of those wondrous old days that have vanished into the great unknown.

We have yet a short distance to climb ere we top the ridge, 1500 feet above Spalato. We take a last look at the fair land beneath us, at the far blue haze, and then, turning our backs upon it, enter a land of rocks and stunted shrub; a short descent, and we cross a level plain towards a range of low hills; a few carts we meet, primitive-looking concerns, driven by red-turbaned figures whose hard faces denote them to be true sons of the Kosjak. The plain is covered with broken grey rocks, intermingled with green shrub, a poor, barren waste that offers little substance for life. Reaching the low hills the road ascends, following the course of an almost dried-up river which, judging by the great rocks and enormous débris, must in spring be a roaring torrent, thundering down its uneven bed and waking a thousand echoes among the overhanging crannies. We are again descending and at last have passed through the wide range of hills; ascents and descents follow one another. The country is very rocky, but quite unlike Montenegro, though it must be a hard life for the few peasants that we met or passed.

The road was remarkably fine and we were able to keep up quite a respectable pace. Barely three hours after leaving Spalato we come into sight of Knin, lying

in a plain at our feet, and surrounded by low hills. As we come to the end of the broad range, the road skirts rather a famous local spot, "the Belvedere"; in spring it is a fine waterfall, with a drop of some one hundred feet or so. Now the river lay almost dry, not a drop of water tumbled over the edge, the small stream finding its way through some secret passage and bubbling up from below. The scene is beautiful, the petrified brown rocks in a frame of green. We do not enter Knin, but pass to the right, and ascending a steep hill, regain the heights, which we now find to be an immense tableland. To our left and beneath us we catch but a momentary glimpse of the town, which is almost instantly hidden from view.

Knin was once a famous old place; long ere the Venetian or the Turk appeared it was a royal residence under the Croatian dynasty and the seat of the courts of justice. In the eleventh century the Bishop of Knin was not only Primate of Croatia, but Chief Minister to the Crown, his cathedral (whose ruins have only lately been discovered) being one of the finest of its kind in all Dalmatia. In the early fifteenth century the Moslem conquest passed over Knin, burning the church and obliterating the treasured Christian emblems. In 1647 Knin, with the rest of Dalmatia, fell into the power of Venice. During the French occupation Knin was heavily garrisoned, as Marmont quickly realised its strategical importance. There are many famous remains around Knin, Roman, Bogomile, Christian and Moslem; indeed, Munro, who took part in the Archæologist Congress of 1894, speaks much of this locality in his book.

We had now some seventy miles to do, and this we accomplished in about two hours and a half. I am afraid that the reader will fancy I lay too much stress upon the time occupied, but as this was really the very first enjoyable ride since leaving Herzegovina (from a motorist's

point of view, *bien entendu*), I plead that as my excuse. The road was broad, flat and with a wonderful surface, and we quaffed the nectar of the goddess Speed. For weeks we had been forced to crawl at from six to fifteen miles an hour, ever harassed by untamed mules and oxen and subject to endless annoyances (still from a motorist's view). Now all was changed; we were filled with a sense of new-born freedom. The flat tableland was covered with a rocky mixture of brown and green, brown rocks and thick green sage bush contrasting with the intense colour of the azure sky. Not a living thing was in sight, no stubborn mule or restive oxen marred our passage. It was one long glorious rush. Mercédès, imbued with the desire to reach the far horizon in the shortest possible time, her customary hum had developed into a weird screech as she tore onward. Gradually I gave her more and more, till, finally, I had the throttle and spark levers hard down upon their quadrants, and we were being hurled through the air at nearly sixty miles an hour. Mercédès rocked and swayed with the intensity of her exertions. The wind-screen was up, but we were goggled and protected from the fierce blast, which whistled past our ears like a tornado, quite prohibiting any idea of speech; indeed, we were beyond the desire of speech; it was all-sufficient just to cling to the arms of our seats for dear life and give ourselves over to the enjoyment of those sensations that are like none other in the world. Our whole mind was centred upon the road; trees, rocks and thick shrubs flew past at lightning speed, objects took shape in the distance, were reached in a bound and as quickly vanished into the dim past.

Reader, I must again crave your indulgence, but though it may seem a little thing to you, yet to us, wearied by the weeks of anxiety and worries, these few hours will for ever live in our hearts. Had we but known what the next few journeys called upon us to face,

I feel sure we should have lingered longer upon the wonderful road to Zara.

A wide turn on our way brought us a moment's respite from the fierce wind, but almost instantly we were again heading across another great plain, no longer limitless, but bounded upon our right by a faint, jagged outline, the great range of the Vallabit Alps, the divider of Dalmatia and Croatia, Hungary and Austria, and the barrier that we should have to cross upon our northern journey from Zara. It was in the midst of this immense waste that we were treated to a sight that is given to few strangers to witness—a great gathering of the wild Molacci folk. From distances they had come until everywhere around the country lay deserted and desolate, accounting for our splendid burst of speed. This immense fair centred round a great cattle market held in a small village some twenty miles from Zara. It was the first sign of habitation as far as I can remember since leaving Knin, and in a few seconds we had plunged into a spectacle that proved to be one of the great surprises of the tour.

Imagine the Serbian gathering of Sarájevo exaggerated tenfold, double the intensity and brilliancy of the colours, exaggerate the quantity of the jewellery, the weight and size of the ornaments, and you may gain an idea of the audience of which we found ourselves the chief attraction. Such a blaze of monstrous colour I could not have conceived ; there must have been quite two thousand of the fantastic figures moving about in the confined space. How am I to attempt to analyse the separate units that go to make up the moving mass, so as to give any idea of the general effect ?

The men were great strong fellows, of magnificent physique, with dark features, wearing a short red jacket elaborately embroidered in gold, blue and green cord, and waistcoats to match. The buttons of the coats were

enormous silver balls, some as large as tennis-balls, filigree-worked, while others were flat and the size of saucers. White shirts and blue trousers, ending in fancy gaiters and raw-hide shoes laced with cord. Upon the heads heavy turbans of twisted red cloth. The women were dressed almost in pure white, and in figure and face resembled nothing so much as North American Indian squaws. Jet-black glossy hair, parted down the centre, was plastered down upon the temples and plaited, being interwoven with coloured cloths and beads, their faces sunburnt, their eyes dark and deep-set, high cheek-bones and narrow mouths. A white cloth is draped from the head and hangs down to the shoulders, completing the last touches. Indeed, the whole tribe of the Molacci are different from the interior races. It is generally believed that this facial difference is due to their ancestors being Roman refugees, driven inland by the Slavs. Forming themselves into bands, they managed in time to gain such strength as to become a race apart, a race that for nearly twelve hundred years lived as robbers and brigands, when opportunity occurred sweeping down upon the coast towns or pillaging stray caravans and travellers. Others believe that they are the descendants of the original Avars that overran the land in the early sixth century and were almost obliterated by the Croats ; however this may be, there is little record of them until the fourteenth century, when the Moslem invasion drove them from their homes and forced them to take refuge among the mountains. By religion they were Catholics, and this, combined with the surrender of their homes, inflamed their hearts against the Moslem, so that many of them took service with Venice and proved brave and loyal adherents, serving the republic well and fighting fiercely against the Turks. Their descendants to-day carry with them an indefinable something that speaks of the centuries of freedom behind them, much the same air as that of the wilder gipsies,

yet incomparable to the light step and gallant bearing of the Montenegrans.

The sides of the road were lined with booths filled to overflowing by these dazzling figures, eating and drinking to their heart's content, and as we passed they shouted in their rough voices, toasting us merrily. We stopped for a moment or two, and while I ran back to get a photo they gathered ten deep around us; others standing upon their wooden benches added to the chorus; many timidly touched the car, and others, leaning forward, gazed awe-struck into our faces. We could now see how really gorgeous were the ornaments of the women, for it is no uncommon thing for them, the unmarried girls especially, to carry their whole fortune, laid out in cunningly worked ornaments, upon their persons, and, as in the case of more civilised folk to-day, to encourage the suitor by the visible size of the "dot." Several women reached out brown hands and stroked the sleeve of Sheila's silk dust-coat, receiving so winning a smile in return that they quickly recognised a friend and showed to our gaze many unbroken sets of snow-white teeth. The majority wore heavy silver ear-rings that rested upon the shoulders; their breasts were often covered by a veritable armour of silver and copper coins, bracelets, rings, charms, till it appeared as though they must be bowed down by very weight.

So thick was the crowd that it was a minute after I had regained my seat before we could proceed. Horses, mules, oxen reared and tried to bolt, and even then their dazzling owners, while struggling with the refractory animals, endeavoured to wave us a cheery greeting. Indeed, the keynote of the whole scene was peace and joy, and as we remembered the country we had passed through, the great, silent plain, the bare, wind-swept rocks and stunted shrub, we marvelled from whence the multitude had sprung. The crowd followed us to the end

of the village to give us a last rousing farewell, and an indistinct memory of a line of moving colour—red, blue and white—intensified by the scorching rays of the mid-day sun. Five minutes later every house had vanished and we were tearing across a broken desert to the invisible sea.

It was providential that we had not arrived a few hours later, when the fair would have ended, and we should have found the road lined by the carts and animals of the multitude returning to their solitary homes upon the great expanse or in the naked Valebit.

We had some twenty miles more of this wild rush, the last few miles being a gentle descent to the coast. From our start we had, though raising much dust, escaped ourselves, but during those last few miles we had an experience similar to when we were *en route* for Trau and were completely smothered. In vain we slowed down, crawling or spurting was immaterial, and we had simply to sneeze and bear it as best we could.

Nearing Zara, I looked in vain for the remains of Trajan's great aqueduct, that stupendous work which ranks as one of the greatest achievements of Roman engineering, stretching from Zara to the River Krka, a distance of fifty-one miles. No wonder that the savage Avars, who ultimately crushed Jadero, were overawed by the endless line of arches, which they attributed to the work of fairies or *vilas*, calling it *Vilenska Zeed* or "Fairy Wall," just as during the Middle Ages the great aqueduct at Segovia was supposed by popular superstition to be the work of the devil by a degenerate people incapable of realising the heights of civilisation to which their Roman conquerors had risen, and from which they had fallen many centuries before.

Zara is not unlike Cadiz, though its position is not nearly so fine ; nevertheless, the sea washes it upon three sides, keeping the air comparatively cool even in summer.

We entered by the Porta Terra Firma. The water is lapping the road upon our left and covered with boats; beneath the winged emblem of Venice we pass and are in Zara, the most northern town of Dalmatia, and breathing, like its comrades of the coast, wonderful tales of bygone days and vanished heroes. Our hotel lay upon the sea front, a beautiful promenade gazing out upon Adria; yet these flat promenades stretching round the three water-washed sides of Zara were once immense ramparts, similar to that upon the land side. Peace has come, and the great battlements have been levelled to make beautiful walks where the citizens of Zara to-day may enjoy the fresh breezes.

It was early afternoon, and after we had seen Mercédès stowed in a dirty wooden shed, right across the town, we returned to wash the majority of the dust away, that is, as much as we could get at without completely undressing, and sallied forth to gain a fleeting vision of the place during the two short hours of daylight that remained.

Zara, you will say at first sight, is Italian; it is peopled by Italians, and the language is Italian. You are right of Zara of to-day, save for the lower classes and rough peasants who are generally of the Molacci. The streets are narrow, and the slice of heaven seen between the houses is almost obscured by a network of electric wires. Some of the modern buildings are quite good, but the real charm consists of the many choice and beautiful remnants of a past age that one quickly gets to love. Zara of to-day stands upon the very spot where two thousand years ago stood Jadera of the Romans, capital of Liburnia; civilisation of that day ran as high here as it did in Salona itself. The Imperial galleys found good shelter in the quiet harbour, bringing prosperity to this child of Rome. Legions marched inland until the whole country paid homage to the royal purple. Roman Zara

vanished beneath the wave of Barbarians in the sixth century. Then came Zara of the Middle Ages, with Venetian Zara, a breakwater to the wave of Moslem conquest, and finally Zara of to-day.

Long before the Moslem invasion Venetian influence was supreme in Zara. Venice and Hungary wrestled mightily for possession of the town, whose position Venice considered so important that she made its capture a matter of vital importance. Sometimes the citizens of Zara revolted against the Doge, and once the Genoese secured temporary possession of the place during their wars with Venice. The fear of the Turks finally solidified Venetian rule, for the citizens of Zara, like the whole of the people of Dalmatia, willingly accepted the rule of the Winged Lion in preference to that of the Crescent.

It was Venice that erected the massive fortifications to shelter the city from any attack by sea. When Zara revolted her citizens were able, by help of these same ramparts, to defy Venice very successfully, suffering two famous sieges, 1202 and 1346.

The fourth, or rather the fifth Crusade, upon its way to the Holy Land, had arranged with Venice to supply the necessary ships. When the great army arrived at the City of Lagoons, however, it was found that there was not sufficient money to make up the agreed sum. The Doge of Venice, "blind old Dandolo," seized upon their embarrassment, and proceeded to turn it to account, offering to provide the much-desired ships free, if the Crusaders would aid Venice in recapturing the rebel city of Zara, then under Hungarian protection. The Crusaders, eager to come to blows with the Moslems, were at first averse to turning their arms upon brother Christians, but finally accepted the offer. It is said that when they beheld the great walls of Zara the Crusaders were struck with terror at the prodigious task before them; however, they redeemed their promise,

and after five days of continuous fighting took the city by storm.

One hundred and forty years later Venice was again compelled to recapture Zara, Hungary having seized the town and strongly garrisoned it. A large fleet, under the command of the famous Marino Faliero, sailed from Venice in 1346, and after a brilliant siege the Venetians defeated the King of Hungary and slew some eight thousand of his troops. This siege of Zara ranks as one of the greatest of the Middle Ages, and opened before Marino Faliero a life as brilliant as its end was sad.

The famous ramparts no longer exist, having given place to charming promenades, where one may stroll beneath the shady trees and, while gazing out to sea, materialise from out of the blue haze the shadowy spectres of the avenging ships of Venice.

If you walk across the town from sea to sea, you will find traces of old Zara in all its ages. Jadara of the Romans is abundantly in evidence. At one end of the market-place stands a tall Roman pillar of finished stone, an elegant emblem of its age. Once part of some great temple, it was used by the Venetians as a place of punishment ; witness the iron manacles still hanging from a time-worn ring, and here it was that criminals were brought to be scourged. But for the cream of all the Roman memories we must find San Donato, once a church, now a museum. The way is treacherous, and we pass through a poor stone passage, but the reward is tenfold. The history of the place is curious as well as interesting. It is supposed to have been erected about the ninth century and is, therefore, almost the oldest church upon Austrian territory. For centuries it passed as a poor Christian chapel, and in the Middle Ages fell into disuse, finally serving the purposes of a military store and wine cellar.

In 1877 excavations were begun in the floor, when,

to the amazement of the workers, it was found that the foundations of the church were composed of a confused mass of noble Roman columns, broken in many places, beautiful capitals, sarcophagi, tablets bearing inscriptions, and a host of other valuable relics thrown indiscriminately together. The only explanation that can be offered to account for this is that the early Christians, the founders of the church, filled with fury at the centuries of pagan despotism, seized every emblem of the old faiths and used them as common foundations for their building. In a manner fit to break the heart of an archæologist, the beautiful emblems of a lost age were lying one upon the other, exquisite Corinthian columns wantonly broken to pieces, inscriptions defaced and statuary piled headlong between sarcophagi. It seemed as though no treatment was too brutal for the divine sculpture.

The early Christian churches were plain to a degree, their worshippers infused with the same spirit that, centuries later, prompted the followers of Cromwell and Monmouth to deface the beauties of our own cathedrals. Loving care has been bestowed upon the once almost hopeless heap, each pillar and stone is carefully laid out for inspection; the visitor actually stands upon the identical pavement of a Roman street; the great blocks of stone are almost perfect.

For thirteen hundred years or more they have been hidden from the light of day, protected by the depth of débris above. The building is circular, some three storeys high, and from our position upon the flags of the old street we are shown a mark some twenty feet high upon the side of the circular wall; it is the height of the original Christian pavement. Above that is the old church.

It would be mere repetition of the guide-books were I to chronicle the thousand and one treasures of San Donato. We spent two hours wandering through the

building. In the upper galleries are many glass cases filled with trinkets innumerable, while the walls are hung with old friezes.

Of medieval Zara there are many traces ; perhaps the finest is the beautiful campanile at the Convent of St. Maria, erected in 1105 by King Coloman of Hungary, who had taken the city by storm earlier in the year, and the Venetian campanile of the cathedral. Zara is full of churches ; go where you will, you cannot get out of sight of a church door ; one can feast to the full upon holy buildings in Zara—alas, my space is limited! The cathedral, I believe, possesses the finest façade in Dalmatia, but I must not enumerate its other beauties lest I be tempted to treat the sister churches in the same way. However, the treasury contains many curious relics, including the pastoral staff of Archbishop Valaresso, who founded the campanile. There are also many legs and arms of saints enclosed in silver and sealed, and one, we were told, contains a finger of St. John the Baptist. After inspecting several more churches, we found ourselves passing through a small archway on to the quay ; it was the Porta Marina, built principally of fragments of a Roman tomb ; there is also a later inscription, relating to the battle of Lepanto, 1571. The year 1571 marks perhaps the most momentous event during the stormy history of Dalmatia. For more than a century the Moslem had overrun the land, sacking cities, burning whole villages, destroying crops and carrying fire and sword throughout Dalmatia, until the inhabitants were forced to seek shelter within the walls of the coast strongholds. Upon the sea matters were little better, the islands of the Adriatic offering a safe refuge for the bloody pirates who harried the coast and perpetrated many foul deeds. Hungary at that time was fighting for very existence, and Venice was alone able to cope with the Infidel.

In the year of which I write (1571) the position of Dalmatia was indeed terrible, and Venice, aided by her allies, determined to make a last effort by collecting a great armada with which to give battle to the Turks. Every city along the coast provided ships and men, and upon April 13th seventy galleys, under the command of Giralomo Zane, set sail from Zara to join the great fleet under the banner of Don John of Austria.

At Lepanto was fought one of the greatest naval battles of the world, the Christians gaining a glorious victory. In the words of Lafuente, the Spanish historian: "Never had the Mediterranean witnessed on her bosom, nor shall the world again see, a conflict so obstinate, a butchery so terrible, men so valiant, or so enraged." The Moslem supremacy upon the sea was broken, and Pius V, hearing of the stupendous victory, exclaimed: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."

The Porta Terra Firma, by which we entered Zara, is the only land gate of the city. Beneath the archway, resplendent in memories of the past, Ladislaus of Naples, in 1403, entered the city in state as claimant for the crown of Hungary against Sigismund. It will be remembered that in the catacombs of Jajce are the arms and tomb of Hrvoje, the king-maker of Bosnia and the greatest warrior of the age; he espoused the cause of Ladislaus and at Zara received the title of Duke of Spalato.

Five years later Ladislaus, weary of his fruitless struggles, passed for the last time out of the Porta Terra Firma, and Venice once again took formal possession through the same gateway.

Many times the Moslem, in his fierce forays, swept up to the very walls of Zara, but each time the brave defenders, aided by the great ramparts, withstood the attack. In 1813 Zara had become a French fortress, and while Austria pressed her hardy Croatian troops down

from the Valebit, two English frigates blockaded the city by sea and landed a detachment of sailors, who threw up earthworks beside the Porta Terra Firma itself, finally forcing the surrender of the French.

It was curious that we had been unable to obtain any particularly fine grapes at Spalato, with its beautiful situation and close proximity to the wine-growing Riviera of the Seven Castles; yet at Zara, under the shadow of the barren Valebit Alps, the Molacci peasants brought into the market the finest dark grapes I have ever seen. Larger than hot-house grapes, they had all the flavour of their birth in the open air, and we laid in a large stock before leaving.

The women here still take their full share in the work. We were leaning upon the balcony, on to which our rooms opened, after lunch next day, watching the flat fruit-boats unloading upon the quay below, when we witnessed an incident so perfectly typical that I feel I must recount it. A large wooden tub had been filled with grapes, and was waiting to be carried to the wine-press in the town. A man and his wife were employed upon the work, and to the observant eye they must have been but lately wed, so attentive was he, that is, according to the fashion of his kind. Be it to his credit that he did not leave his wife to manage it as best she could, but stood by her gallantly, and with the aid of a friend (male) managed, after some difficulty, to lift the heavy tub high enough to enable her to get beneath it and take the weight upon her head. When it was safely balanced, and at the same time the poor woman's neck nearly broken, so that her head appeared to have sunk into her shoulders, he steadied the tub with one hand, and taking her right hand caressingly in his disengaged hand, led her away, talking kindly to her the while—a beautiful example of husband-like devotion.

We could at first hardly believe our eyes, and it was

as well that Ken was thirty feet from the ground, or I fancy the considerate lover would have received a not inconsiderable surprise. This incident is not in the smallest degree exaggerated or overdrawn, the thing occurred exactly as described ; it only shows the inferior position held by women the nearer to the East one goes. In the Valebit Alps, over whose ranges we must pass, the peasants, who are poor to the verge of starvation, marry when quite young, for the simple reason that the man gains an extra beast of burden and is put to practically little extra expense save his wife's food, for the home is of the most miserable description.

CHAPTER XXI

AN EXHILARATING JOURNEY

OBROVAZZO—THROUGH THE TEETH OF THE VALEBIT—DALMATIA BEHIND US—CROATIA—FIRST SIGNS OF TROUBLE—ROAD BAD—GOSPEĆ—UNLUCKY MARKET—MORE TROUBLE—WRONG ROAD—A NERVE TESTER—STRANDED—OUR LODGINGS FOR THE NIGHT—PLITVICA NEXT DAY—AUTUMNAL TINTS—STRANGE EVOLUTIONS OF A HORSE—SERIOUS OBSTACLE—OVERCOME—ROUGH ROAD—DESCENT TO ZENGG—THE USCOCS—STRICKEN COAST—FIUME IN THE DARK—BACK TO CIVILISATION.

OUR next goal was Fiume, the first touch of true modern civilisation, no longer in Dalmatia, but Croatia and Hungary. Fiume is something like ninety miles along the coast as the crow flies, but the road makes a considerable detour and the journey must be quite 150 miles. If the road was similar to that from Spalato we could do it in the day, but memories of three passages through Croatia put an end to that idea. About twenty miles from the main road lie a series of celebrated lakes called the Plitvica and justly famous. Baedeker speaks of a Touristen-Haus upon the water's edge, and as this would be about one hundred miles distant we determined to make for that place. We were called at 4 a.m. upon the morning we left, dressing by candle-light. I hurried to the garage (?) to bring Mercédès, for she was in rather an awkward place and I always make a point of super-

vising everything myself. We had coffee and bread while watching daylight break. The sun rising behind us quickly lit up the misty surface of the sea; the whole heaven a beautiful fawn, deepening rapidly to blue.

Quickly the island of Uglain took shape from the ocean, the old Venetian walls standing out bright and clear.

It was broad daylight as we drove through the Porta Terra Firma, though few people were astir. How one misses the activity of the Moslem at daybreak; no minarets call to the Faithful, no busy circle gathers round the fountains ere evoking Allah. All is still as death; a few sentries are visible pacing the ramparts, but otherwise we have the world to ourselves, and once out of Zara are the only living things upon the landscape. For some miles we followed our road from Spalato and then branched off, heading straight for the ashy peaks of the Valebit. We are again covered with dust and white as millers, the road is good and we skim along at exhilarating speed. As we rush onward the mountains become taller, until they seem to tower directly above us. "Les stratifications sont si bizarres qu'on les dirait façonnées par la main de l'homme," wrote M. Yriarte in 1876. We knew that our way passed through their midst, but the eye can find no break, and sweeping them with our glasses we at last pick out the road. In several long arms it zigzags backwards and forwards, leaving the green shrub and slanting up the mountain-side; up it goes until it comes to the place where, like the Dolomites, the naked rock commences. There the grey streak abruptly vanishes, and we speculated among ourselves as to what happens to it, Ken favouring the idea of a tunnel, to which I objected. Our attention was soon distracted from the road, for the great plain we were crossing is cut in two by a river. A steep hill leads downwards to a valley in which an old Venetian fort, now a monastery,

proudly stands, as though conscious of its many honourable scars received from the Turk.

While Venice held Dalmatia, she fought fiercely to keep back the great wave of Moslemism that was sweeping northward with irresistible power. We were crossing that boundary line which four hundred years ago the Cross and the Crescent contested so fiercely. How often must the brave defenders have sighed for their homes upon the lagoons, as they watched incessantly for the last great attack of the Infidel! Indeed, this particular stretch of country has seen as much fierce fighting in its time as any other in the land, for here Sigismund of Hungary waged constant war with Venice.

We pass quite close to the inland sea of Novigrad, joined to the Adriatic by a thin channel. This water is famous for its tunny fisheries. The old Castle of Novigrad, in the little bay, bears a sad memory of unfortunate Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, and her more fortunate daughter Marie, wife of Sigismund; we did not, however, go out of our way to visit this spot, though we were more than half inclined to do so. We are now right under the shadow of the mountains, but ere commencing the climb we find we have a considerable drop of some six hundred feet to the valley of the Zrmanja, where nestles Obrovazzo, the last Dalmatian village, beneath the ruined castle, built in 1647 by the Venetians and captured from them by Sigismund through the treachery of the Venetian prefect's wife, a country woman whose brother was in the Hungarian army. Obrovazzo is a small town, and the exporting of timber, wrested from the steep Valebit and shipped down the river, is the chief occupation of its inhabitants. There is little else to live for in Obrovazzo. The river flows merrily along between its high banks. A mile of road is seen vanishing above, and far into the heavens tower the distant summits of the Savage Alps. That is what, day after day, the

forsaken folk of Obrovazzo see, a little world all their own.

Mercédès awoke the echoes in the narrow streets, and brought out a fair-sized crowd, who excitedly followed us to the bridge, whence the climb proper starts; a clear road lay before us, mounting steeply up the side of the gorge, and with a roar of exultation Mercédès leapt forward, leaving the excited crowd and whirling us upward with exhilarating speed. To our left the river and town sank like stones, the crowd lost shape and the flat green-brown plain towards Zara came into view beneath us.

What a wonderful climb that was, a climb leading from the green valley into a scene of utter wildness. The road, excellent both in surface and construction—the grading superb. To-day it would tax the powers of our engineers to plan out and carry such a road over the Valebit, yet ninety years ago Austria accomplished the feat. Unfortunately we met several huge timber waggons descending; the horses were almost wild, and at the sight of Mercédès commenced to rear dangerously. It was only by stopping the engine and helping the driver that we got the great lumbering affair past safely. This occurred many times, and on each occasion we lost ten minutes and earned the heartfelt thanks of the harassed drivers. The road writhes upon the mountain-side like a great snake, and as we climb, now this way, now that, we can see the flat plain stretching almost to the horizon. But stay; just where the earth and sky seem to meet there is a hazy blue streak, the sea, and as we mount our view expands and the thin streak widens until we have gained a bird's-eye view of the deep-coloured Adria.

We are now some two thousand feet above the plains, and are approaching the place where vegetation ends and only bare lava rocks remain; already we have

passed through the different states of vegetation, and here only the hardy northern plants of our own clime can live. It will be remembered that, from below, we had seen the streak of road vanish among the highest peaks and wondered what really happened to it. We were all eager to decide the point, and upon rounding the last turn, which is quite a sight in itself—for it overhangs the valley far below—we come in sight of the finish. It is grander than the Falzarego Pass in Tirol; the way is barred by a row of naked peaks some two thousand feet in height. We called them the teeth of the Valebit. There is no footing whatever, and only an experienced party with ropes could ascend the precipice sides. Yet those old engineers were not daunted by this seeming barrier; they found an opening some three hundred feet above where the rocks are split in twain and actually carried the road up the face of the precipice in zigzags, cutting their way through on the very teeth of the Valebit. It is a piece of road—if road is not too commonplace a word to use—that the genius of those old-world engineers alone could call into being. To appreciate it one must ascend from Obrovazzo, as much of the effect is lost by travelling in the opposite direction. Full of marvel, we climbed up that wonderful passage, leaving the last blade of grass and clinging to the edge of the precipice. The road is perfectly safe and well made, and we have a few minutes ere we turn our faces inland in which to take a last farewell of Dalmatia.

How well we knew her! Below us stretches the flat plain of rock and shrub, dotted with many an old battle-scarred keep, and beyond is the everlasting ocean.

In another minute Dalmatia, like her beautiful sisters, will have become only a memory to us; a mirage of wondrous sights, a dream of ages gone. Ragusa, Cattaro, Spalato, Salona, Zara—where can one find such wonders again? List what history they tell—of Rome, Byzantium,

Corsair, Venice and Hungary, of Russia, France and England treading upon the other's heels, and each in turn fighting fiercely to retain this narrow strip of land, a land flowing with milk and honey, possessing rich sea-ports and great cities, backed by a giant wall of barren alps, whose vastnesses shelter the exile and the robber. Truly, as Mrs. Holback says, " Dalmatia dwells apart, in a borderland somewhat off the highway of the world's traffic, like a shadow left by the receding tide between the sea and shore, belonging more to the East than to the West, more to the past than to the present."

Dalmatia has vanished and only a memory remains, for we have turned inland and passing between two giant stone sentinels are climbing up a rock-strewn valley, a desolate scene that chills the heart and makes one realise what winter in the Valebit means. For though in summer the air is oppressive, when winter comes not even the Alps themselves can produce greater severity. The sun behind us lights up each separate rock, yet cannot cast a warm shade upon them. We are climbing quickly now and, reaching the end of the valley, the next moment the scene has undergone a complete transformation.

We are commencing to climb another valley similar in shape to the last, but how different ! The bleak, grey rocks are changed to red and are broken by clumps of trees, whose leaves are themselves of the brightest brown. The effect illuminated by the sunshine is very beautiful, two different shades of burnished copper blending together in perfect harmony. It was nearing the end of this short valley that the first unpleasant incident occurred, and we little knew when we entered the valley of the autumn tints that upon reaching its end we should forfeit much of what had made our journey so enjoyable up to now. However, I anticipate.

Almost as we reached the highest point of the climb, 3400 feet above the sea of Novigrad, we rounded a sharp

rocky corner, coming suddenly upon a small white house nestling amidst the rocks. Before the open door stood two heavily laden timber waggons, their pair horses facing us. I do not know who was the most astonished, the horses or ourselves, for we had not dreamed of finding any sign of habitation in this region. We pulled up instantly, but not before the horses had become terrified. The first pair, rearing up, turned round, almost upsetting the long heavy cart in so doing, the other pair endeavoured to enter the house, jamming the doorway and preventing the drivers from getting out. The first pair had by now got round and galloped madly up the hill, while their driver, squeezing out of the doorway, and shouting in a strange tongue, set off in pursuit. We saw the horses reach the summit, pause for a moment irresolute, and then plunge down the other side, the driver running madly also, disappearing from view. Mercédès' engine had long since been stopped, and the second pair of horses were led past dancing. Several men set off in pursuit of the runaways and their unlucky driver, and it was quite twenty minutes before a figure appeared upon the ridge and beckoned us to proceed. Slowly we crawled along until we too arrived upon the summit.

The Hungarian side of the Valebit we found to be deeply wooded and totally different from the Dalmatian side. We were looking down upon Croatia, nearly 1700 feet below, an immense plain, some 1600 feet above the sea, from which it is separated by the jagged Valebit. There was no sign of the cart or the man who had waved, but we commenced the descent. About three hundred feet below we came upon a cluster of houses and a small but excited group of peasants in the middle of the road. We stopped, and they gathered around. One man pointed up the hill, right into the thick of the trees, and called out something. A cheery voice answered and we could hear the creak-creak of a heavy cart being drawn over

a rough track. It was evident that the runaways had been stopped here, and that they were being led back to the summit up the old road, or by some hidden way. The people behaved wonderfully well under the circumstances, and we proceeded cautiously, thankful that things had turned out so well.

The road upon the Croatian side of the Valebit was in a disgraceful condition, narrow and rutty; but, what was worse, crossed by innumerable watercourses, just round mounds stretching across the road, and so high that I had fears for our fly-wheel. As crossing them in the ordinary way meant practically stopping or else resulted in a dangerous bump, I took them upon the slant, so as to minimise the shock, but this becomes very trying after the first fifty or so are passed, and we were exceedingly glad to reach the level, 1700 feet beneath. The dress of the people had changed, it was now similar to what we had seen round Agram; a white smock, large white baggy trousers with fringe, bare legs and feet, and often a heavy sheepskin over the shoulders with the hair outside. We now enjoyed a comparatively pleasant thirty-mile run across the great plain, bounded in every direction by mountains. Incident No. 2 proved to be a woman, who occasioned us some trouble by walking towards us in the centre of the road. We were travelling fairly fast at the time and upon nearing her blew the horn hard. She took not the slightest notice, and I actually had to stop Mercédès; even then she would have walked straight into the radiator had not Rodgers shouted loudly. She turned aside, just enough to miss the car, and as she passed we caught a glimpse of her face. The poor woman was quite mad, and taking no notice of us, she continued her solitary walk along the middle of the road.

We were now approaching Gospeć, the largest village on the road, and had been much surprised by the almost

complete absence of traffic. The explanation proved to be that it was market day at Gospeć and that the fair had ended two hours ago. Consequently we were met eight miles before reaching the town by the advance guard of an endless string of horse and mule waggons, and led oxen. The next hour was one long nightmare of narrow escapes and heart-racking anxiety. The horses endeavoured to bolt in every direction, many of the wildest actually had no bridles, only halters, while the mules were if anything worse than the horses. We caused a perfect pandemonium of noise and fright. Each separate conveyance, whether drawn by horses or mules, behaved in exactly the same manner. It was like clockwork, just as though each concern was wound up and expected to " go off " precisely the same as its neighbour. Sitting anxiously in our places we knew every sign. First, back go the ears, then forward, and finally flat back ; next a rear upon the hind legs, then a frantic endeavour to wriggle out of their collars, and finally a mad shy away from us. Sometimes the whole concern went into the ditch ; at others a kilometer stone or stump of a tree stopped it, but one and all caused such a hullabaloo that it took all our stock of fortitude and patience to carry us safely through. In due time we reached the village, only to find we had leapt from the frying-pan into the fire. I remember some years ago once making a similar entrance into Kolding in Denmark, but then we had a hotel to shelter us.

Gospeć is a pleasant little place that only thirty years ago was reckoned as a frontier town, where Austria's ever-ready troops might guard the land from the advance of the Turk. Bosnia lies at the extremity of the plain, and from her sweet possession the Moslem would look with covetous eyes not upon Croatia but through Croatia to her more favoured sister Dalmatia. The two races were kept in a state of constant friction by religious differences,

and until the occupation fierce forays upon both sides were not uncommon.

Gospeć lies upon the swift-flowing Licca, which gives its name to the plain; this river follows the general trend of those of the Herzegovina, for upon reaching the Valebit it disappears into the mouth of a huge cavern to reappear far below in Dalmatia, where it reaches the Adriatic. The natives, who are the most devoted and superstitious of Catholics, naturally endow the spot where the Licca disappears with innumerable legends, calling it the entrance to the ocean of eternity and the dark valley of death.

For seven miles after leaving Gospeć, we had to pass a further procession of traffic; it was easier than meeting them, but nevertheless occupied the better part of an hour. By the time we had left the last cart behind us our patience was almost exhausted, and when, half an hour later, a back tyre collapsed I felt I could have cheerfully slaughtered my best friend. We had lunch after fitting a new cover, and it was two o'clock before we were ready to proceed. We now leave the main road and proceed to steer for the Plitvica lakes. By careful study of our maps, we managed either to strike a false road or else to experience how little the geographer knew of what he was mapping! It was three o'clock when we commenced the new path, and five minutes later the front tyre ran flat. This was attended to without having to fit a new cover. We had now a climb of a thousand feet or more; the road extremely narrow, and very broken, and often a mere track passing through thick woods. There was no place wide enough to turn, or even to pass another conveyance, and we were occupied in offering up small prayers that we should pass through without encountering any other vehicle.

This brings me to Incident No. 4, and one that proved to be of rather a nerve-testing nature. We had reached

the summit and were descending the opposite slope. From the valley there first rises a steep cliff some five hundred feet high ; from this a slope ascends, and it was very near this edge that the thing happened. There is a large clearing of trees where the road takes a sharp elbow bend. The whole road here is quite visible, there is nothing to hinder the person descending from seeing anything upon the lower portion of the road and vice versa ; the bend also is quite open. There is a short cut that connects the two roads some eighty yards from the bend, which is naturally very rough and steep. I have enlarged upon these points, because it is absolutely necessary in order to understand what occurred. As we were descending we saw upon the bend three pair-horsed carts, each carrying a heavy barrel probably containing water, as that liquid is somewhat scarce in the hill villages. We arrived together at the spot where the old road cuts the bend, that is about eighty yards from the elbow. The carts drove on to the grass, off the road, and we pulled well to one side and stopped Mercédès. There is no doubt if the first driver, a heavy, powerful Slav, in long sheep-skins, had taken care he could have got his animals past as did his two companions. But he was careless, trying to bluster them along and taking no heed of their danger signals. Rodgers and Ken were jumping down to seize the horses' heads, when the animals reared high upon their hind legs and swinging round to the right bolted down the old track, the cart swaying and bumping against the rocks.

The man may have been a fool, but he was no coward. With a leap as quick as theirs, he had the near horse by the bit, and tore down the rough slope hanging gamely on. Like a flash they crossed the road below ; the cart, catching a stone, threw the barrel into the air (it must have contained three-quarters of a ton of water) which, falling to the ground, went down the slope in great

bounds straight for the precipice edge. If once it had reached this edge (as we discovered later) it must have dropped five hundred feet on to a village that nestled beneath ; by a miraculous intervention of Providence it struck a boulder and flew to pieces, sending a sheet of water into the air. At the same time the cart hit another boulder and fell upon its side. The man, letting go his hold, rolled clear, thank heaven, and the horses, checked by his pluck, stopped not a hundred yards from the edge ! That was a bad minute, for, though in actual time it occupied no more, to us, sitting in Mercédès, it seemed an eternity. Had the man slipped he must have met a terrible death beneath the heavy cart ; or had the barrel reached the precipice Heaven alone knows what damage it might have done among the houses beneath. I do not mind acknowledging that I was afraid, genuinely afraid. We were not in danger—that would have been easier to bear ; it was the sickening feeling of utter powerlessness, of having to look on and see all, without the chance of helping or being able to avoid the seeming catastrophe. I know that my hair was wringing wet when I took off my hat, while Ken, strong man that he is, was white to the lips.

The other horses were got safely past, Ken and Rodgers helping while I trotted down the hill to the wreck which the unfortunate driver was trying to straighten. The carts of the district are very primitive and solid, and though this one had been dragged on its side, it really was none the worse ; the only material damage was the loss of the barrel. The driver, still breathing heavily from his exertions, actually grinned as I slipped a present into his hand to pay the damage and ease his mind. Five minutes later we were crawling down the hill again, thankful that things were no worse. We reached the valley, and passed by the village, beneath the overhanging rocks. As we looked at the grim edge, five hundred feet

above, we tried to imagine that great barrel leaping into space and coming crashing on to the frail huts beneath. Children played about the doors, men and women passed along. How little did these white-clothed figures know of the danger that had passed so close by them, and it sickened us to think of the tragedy that might have been.

Three or four times we met horses, and had incredible difficulty in passing. We had evidently lost the beaten track. Daylight was fast fading when we descended a steep hill some seven hundred feet or more, and came upon a tiny village. We actually found an Austrian gendarme who was able to tell us that the Plitvica lake lay twelve miles away. Our nerves had been considerably strained during the day, and I knew that another hour and a half would hardly be fair to inflict upon the ladies, sporting as they are ; so I determined, if lodgings could be found, to stay here. This resolve resulted in Incident No. 5, and one we would not have missed for worlds.

The inn was of the most primitive nature. We occupied every room, and Mercédès stood among the fowls in the yard. The people of the place were pure Slavs, a large fat woman, two bare-legged girls about twenty years of age, with heavy, merry faces, and three lumbering, unwashed, unshaven men. Everything was bare, floor, chairs, and tables, which was the best thing that could be, judging from the general style. The language was practically Russian, though with many bastard words, unintelligible to us.

Sheila and Dorothy desired tea, which, by the way, was quite unknown, and I descended with a quarter-pound package to the kitchen. I soon had the fat lady, her two daughters, their friends, and the proprietor around me. They examined the leaves, smelt them and rubbed them between their fingers. (I believe they would have eaten them raw had I told them to.) I made them

boil some water upon the fire, and, as it began to bubble, put in a good dose of tea. The audience was by now very excited, and became augmented by two rough carters from the yard dressed in sheep-skins. As the kitchen area was something less than fourteen feet square, and contained besides a roaring stove a large boiler, the atmosphere soon became a trifle warm; so the windows were opened at my request. I made a large overdose of tea, and adding some sugar and milk, passed the greater portion round.

It proved a remarkable success, and I presented the remainder of the packet of tea to the fat proprietress, who promptly embarrassed me by seizing my hand and kissing it, a lead that the present company would have willingly followed had I not escaped from the kitchen and, followed by the two girls, returned hurriedly to our bedrooms with the tea. A dish containing some hard meat soaked in gravy was placed upon the table. Ken was the only one capable of tackling it, and he relinquished the task after the first mouthful, so we fell back upon our own provisions. Meanwhile the village bard and three assistants attended to serenade us, and their efforts were well worth hearing. A mandoline and three guitars, the remainder of the inn folk congregating in a circle behind them. Strange airs they played! Wild, nondescript tunes full of fire and life, conjuring up scenes of strife and war, the girls clapping their hands and the men joining in with hoarse yells of "*Hijar!*" Feet and hands were going strong, and the company became quite worked up towards the end.

Upon the ground floor in a dirty, bare room with wooden tables and benches, a kind of raw *café*, a dozen carters and peasants had congregated, clothed in coarse white sacking and wearing enormous jackets of half-cured sheep-skins. They were drinking fiery white brandy, and kept up a chorus of weird songs at the top of their

voices, till the whole building echoed again. When the noise started our first impression was that a riot had broken out, and Ken and I descended hurriedly to see how Rodgers progressed ; we reached the passage in time to see a big lumbering fellow shoot out of the kitchen door as though propelled by a catapult, and the next second Rodgers' usually cheery face showed at the entrance. He was evidently roused, and trouble would have ensued had we not interfered. It seems he was having supper quietly in the kitchen, when the carter before mentioned lurched in, and, to use his own expression, " went for him like a rocket." The result we had seen, and as the man crawled away to rejoin his companions in the *café* we left things alone, insisting only upon Rodgers coming upstairs with us. Nothing further happened ; the wailing songs were kept up for about two hours, and then the noisy company dispersed. The beds were hard as nails but quite clean, and we passed a quiet night.

We left about nine next morning. The bill was ridiculously small, and we had the pleasure of making a red-letter event of the first auto ever to stay at that little house. The woman kissed Sheila and Dorothy's hand, and the men would have followed suit had they not caught Ken's and my eye ; we ourselves only escaped a like fate by tactfully dodging, and Rodgers, much to his embarrassment, had his hand kissed by a fair damsel destitute of shoes and stockings. We endured a gorgeous send-off ; everyone in the village, men, women, and children, gathered to impede our progress. The gendarme of the previous evening cleared a path, and amidst a salvo of unintelligible cries we bounded away. Out of the unknown we had come, into the unknown we vanished, leaving behind us a recollection that doubtless would help to pass many a winter's evening, when the snow beat against the windows and the Bora howled around

that queer little building lost amidst the wooded mountains of Croatia, unwashed by the tide of civilisation.

If we thought that twelve miles for the day was a journey hardly worthy of notice, we were rudely disillusioned, for those twelve miles were fraught with innumerable unpleasant episodes; the horses went raving mad at sight of Mercédès. Neither in Bosnia, Herzegovina, nor even Montenegro had we experienced such trouble. Really the matter became more than a joke, and we began to regret ever having left the main road. I think we passed through a place called Petrovaselo, after which we had some five miles of very hilly country to traverse. It was magnificently wooded, the autumn tints exquisite; not a leaf of green caught the eye, and the hills were every shade of brown from rich sepia to lightest fawn against a background of intense blue.

We were descending a fairly steep hill about three miles before reaching the lakes when we met a two-horsed cart ascending. We stopped, of course, upon the precipice edge, and motioned for the driver to take the other. Ken, Rodgers, and I descended, and helped to lead the animals past; but when opposite they shied violently, turning the cart into the ditch and shedding a large barrel on to the road. We got them past, but it took the four of us all our time to get that heavy barrel back upon the cart. It was done at last, and we proceeded upon our way, in due course reaching the long-expected Plitvica lakes.

The Touristen-Haus we found to be a large building capable of holding perhaps fifty visitors. It was shuttered up, only a few rooms remaining open. A woman and a boy kept house, and informed us in German that they were going to Agram in three days. The next post, by the way, arrived in May—seven months hence—so that one may imagine how desolate it was. The situation

of the building is superb, gazing down upon five or six lakes, some large, some small, blue, green, grey, and brown, some higher than others, connected by silvery waterfalls and cascades, and framed by the golden brown of the autumnal tints. Save for the faint sound of running water, there reigns intense stillness, everlasting solitude, where nature, as though wearying for a companion, opens her heart to those few favoured mortals lucky enough to wander thither.

It was yet morning, and we spent the remainder of the day revelling in what lay spread out before us. We did not leave the hotel, but just sat upon the leaf-strewn ground gazing and gazing upon the picture. The rest was more than welcome, coming between two such journeys ; for though we knew it not then, our further progress held many unpleasant incidents in store which we were to find out for ourselves all too soon. I forget how many lakes there are, I think about thirteen, some seven miles long in all, and varying some four hundred feet in altitude, the lowest being 1660 feet above sea-level. The surrounding mountains reach to a height of four thousand feet, and, as I mentioned before, are beautifully wooded.

Experience had long since taught us the virtue of early rising. An hour of daylight is better than two in the dark, was our motto, so that half-past six saw us leaving the door next morning. The lakes lay thick with mist, and the sun could not as yet pierce them. For twelve miles or more the road skirts the edge of the waters, ever rising and climbing from lake to lake, one huge staircase ; each step a lake, and each lake a different colour. The road was extremely narrow and very slippery. Every moment we lived in expectant fear of encountering a waggon, and we wondered vaguely what would really happen if we did, for there was scarcely room to pass. That drive was more than beautiful, and we would be

willing to run the risk we did in order to see again what we were shown that morning. I refer to the effect of sunrise upon the autumn tints. Though the water lay misty and cold, untouched by the new-born sun, its coldness only served by contrast to throw up more vividly the rich colouring. Quickly the light caught the hill-tops, and travelled just as swiftly downwards, revealing a mirage of mountains clothed in living fire. The shades are gorgeous enough in full sunshine, but illuminated by the first beams of light, rosy themselves, the effect beggars description. Only Nature herself, in her most fantastic mood, could have evolved that colouring: no artist ever conceived such a blending of shades. Not ruddy brown, but glimmering gold, they sparkled, each leaf outlined against its neighbour. We hardly breathed—it was as though we were gazing upon one of God's hidden wonders. For some minutes the colour remained, then the sun, climbing clear of the distant peaks, shed his full light upon the world, and the glory was gone to us for ever.

As we leave the last lake we head due westward, making for the Adriatic fifty miles away, and occupying four and a half hours to do that distance. Horses were incredibly wild, bolting at sight, and to make matters worse, many were driven without bridle; so that we could scarce make ten miles an hour; but worst of all were the long lumps at short intervals that stretched across the road. Hidden by the dust, and not fifty feet apart, they gave us many a dangerous shock. I wonder the springs stood the strain, considering how heavily we were laden. It was a nasty journey, and we derived little pleasure. The horses—again I return to that subject—were positively unmanageable, and I will recount only one incident that, no matter how improbable and absurd it sounds, really happened. I do not exaggerate in the slightest; indeed, exaggeration would be

impossible, for I feel sure that not even a comic artist ever conceived a more ludicrous episode than the one I am about to relate.

We were cautiously rounding a corner, on the qui vive for horses and water gutters, when we met a pair-horse cart (always a pair-horse, by the way), with two men sitting upon the front. It was evidently used for carrying hay, for its two sides sloped to an angle in the centre. Upon seeing us the horses stopped. (Mercédès' heart I had already silenced.) One man jumped to the ground and ran to their heads. Before he reached them the horses stood straight up upon their hind legs, and one, overbalancing himself, fell back upon the cart. The driver was down on his hands and knees upon the road next moment, just escaping the animal, which fell right upon its back in the cart. The narrow, angular sides of the vehicle exactly fitted the horse, so that it lay quite helpless. The other animal, dropping upon its feet, turned round and bolted back the way it had come, and the last thing we saw was the first horse being whirled into space, kicking wildly at the blue sky, and closely pursued by the man who had first leapt to the ground. Meantime we sat literally glued to our seats by astonishment, absolutely petrified at what we had seen, until the absurdity of the thing struck us, and we had to laugh whether we would or not.

When we recovered our gravity we found another situation that necessitated our immediate attention. The driver had got upon his legs, and now, furiously angry, stood in the middle of the road waving a revolver backwards and forwards in a beautiful line with our chests. Sheila sat in front, with me, and therefore in the line of fire. The man was evidently too angry to speak. For a moment he spluttered, and that moment was long enough to enable Ken to jump from the tonneau and plant himself in front of the gun.

" What the . . . mean you by bringing your ungovernable machine upon a public road ? " spluttered the holder of the gun, in fiery German.

" And what do you mean, sir, by bringing such ungovernable horses upon the public road without bridle or bit ? " Ken answered in the same language (and Ken, of all people, knew the cutting phrases of that great tongue to perfection).

I was down by now, and though inwardly boiling to think the man had drawn upon the ladies, I had to remember what provocation he had had. We cooled matters down eventually, the man taking a short cut to the right, and we proceeded as before.

" What next, I wonder ? " Ken asked vaguely, and we gave it up, leaving a higher power to decide.

The answer came half an hour later. We had had two rather narrow escapes that I will not weary you by relating, and were proceeding cautiously, the road skirting the foot of a low, cone-shaped hill in the form of a semicircle, when we found that our way was blocked by a barrier of stones some three feet high. We descended to examine this new trick of Fate. The road beyond was " up," in every sense of the word ; indeed, one might not walk through the mass of débris that covered it. To our left the hill-side was covered deep with trees, a doleful scene that gazed melancholily down upon our dilemma. While we looked helplessly round we noticed that a bullock-cart, drawn by oxen, was making its way laboriously through the thick bush high up on the hill-side, and as we watched it appeared from beneath the trees directly behind Mercédès. It had arrived by a track leading upwards and of the most primitive construction possible. According to our maps, there was no road within fifty miles that we could take, and unless we forced our way by hook or by crook, we should be in rather an awkward fix.

Leaving Ken with the ladies, I took Rodgers, and together we explored the track. The path was quite wide enough, but evidently it had only existed a few days, and was formed by clearing away the trees, and many tons of rough stones had been spread upon the soft ground, thus leaving a most evil surface. For the rest it ascended steeply some hundred feet, then more or less level, finally descending to join the hard road, being some two kilometres in all. Here and there the track could hardly be distinguished, and I pondered seriously before I finally determined to risk Mercédès. Leaving Rodgers where the good road was joined, with orders to hold back any traffic that might appear, I returned hurriedly to Mercédès ere my resolution failed. I had not much comfort to offer to those waiting anxiously, save that we had forded many rivers with beds as bad as this surface; but here we had a mile or more. Slowly, and with many a nasty jolt, she commenced to climb, her wheels sinking deep into the treacherous surface, cutting and ripping the tyres. Many times I felt the casing beneath the fly-wheel scraping with a heart-rending sound upon the stones. We found afterwards that the two new tyres were completely ruined, the front one being destitute of rubber, and the back, a nonskid, having every steel stud ripped out.

It was pitiable! To feel your boat touch bottom, to see your favourite horse go dead lame—I had almost said to smash your cherished driver or rod, but that is too paltry—and you can imagine something of what we felt; for Mercédès to us has life, and her troubles are ours. It was done at last, and we stood upon the hard road at the cost of four tyres and a very bad quarter of an hour.

We now began a long climb to reach an altitude of some three thousand feet, the road being intercepted with vile watercourses. The view is very lovely, for

we are gazing down upon the blue Adria dotted with islands, and can see the road winding its way in long serpentines down to the water's edge. It was half-past twelve, and we stopped for lunch. Beneath the shade of a spreading tree, and fanned by a cool breeze, we enjoyed an hour's rest. The journey to the sea is very beautiful, but the road is for ever covered with the same atrocious mounds. The few carts we encountered behaved a little better, but nevertheless we had some difficulty in passing. At the foot of the climb nestles a typical Italian town, by name Zengg, a famous old smuggling den and the haunt of pirates ; Zengg possesses a sinister history, a history closely connected with the sea that washes its shores ; many a dark deed has been planned and carried out from this same sleepy little place. There are also the ruins of an old castle, said to have been the refuge of the wild race of Uscocs. Just as they seized old Clissa, above Spalato, so that fighting race held this castle above Zengg, defying the Moslem and fighting to the death against the advance of the Crescent, and at the same time perpetrating such enormities upon the Christian merchantmen that Venice stormed Zengg, and capturing many of the Uscocs, among whom were found nine Englishmen, hung them all. It is worth while to recall the history of this remarkable band of outcasts, the Uscocs.

Their origin is fixed about the time of the Moslem invasion, when many brave men, refusing to tolerate Moslem rule, preferred to bind themselves together (*Scoco*—a fugitive) and seizing some strong castle make fierce forays into the Turkish provinces. All too soon they were joined by many refugees from justice, men who had committed some serious crime for which they had been forced to flee from their homes.

For a time the Uscocs devoted themselves to capturing only the ships of Turks and Jews, and undoubtedly did

much to stay the great wave of Moslem invasion. They occupied Clissa, then held by Hungary, and we have seen how their fierce forays drew down upon the castle the wrath of the Turks. After Clissa had fallen, the Uscocs selected Segna (Zengg) as their head-quarters. Turkey now took more precautions, sending escorts with her merchantmen, so that the Uscocs began to look round for other spoil. Soon they threw pretence to the winds and commenced their career as pirates pure and simple. It would be impossible to exaggerate the fierceness that they displayed, or the inhuman cruelty they practised upon their prisoners. Nothing was sacred, even their women so degraded themselves as to drink the blood of their fallen enemies. I do not propose to relate in detail the long history of their fiendish cruelties. Often protected by Hungary, whose subjects they were, they waged incessant warfare with Venice with diverse fortune; sometimes the Uscocs won, in which case Venice lost a few galleys; when Venice conquered she carried fire and sword into Segna and took ample vengeance by hanging as many of the leaders as she could capture.

Turkey, too, sent many expeditions to crush the Uscocs, but it was no light thing to accomplish. Directly the pirates encountered a larger force than they could fight, they would, if hard pressed, abandon their boats and, taking to the shore, scale the rocky heights, vanishing ere their pursuers could gain a landing.

For nearly two hundred years the Uscocs continued to infest the Adriatic, burning, ravishing and destroying friend and foe alike. Now and then their depredations forced Hungary to interfere, and for a time the Uscocs remained quiet only to break out again worse than ever.

Much as in the case of Algiers, whose piratical inhumanities the powers countenanced so long, neither Hungary nor Venice dare for a time exterminate the

Uscocs at Segna lest the Turk, so near, might seize the opportunity of acquiring the fertile land.

In 1618 the Uscocs concluded a particularly long spell of revolting atrocities by capturing the boat containing Christodero Veniero, and after forcing the crew to walk the plank, they hacked to pieces two friends of Veniero and their wives, afterwards serving him the same, and ended by devouring his bleeding heart, their women participating with even greater fierceness in the revolting deed.

Venice, roused to fury, protested; but Hungary listened unmoved, and Venice proclaimed a war, which lasted some three years.

When peace was concluded the Uscocs were finally suppressed, their fleet being destroyed, and they themselves removed to a district in Croatia, where their descendants live to-day.

We might have stayed at the little hotel of Zengg, but as we had only some fifty odd miles or more and the afternoon was yet young we pushed on.

There now commenced a ride, unique in itself, along an arid coast. The hills slope from a height to the water's edge; the slant is not very acute, but their whole surface looks as though a century of storms had swept every living thing, tree or blade of grass, from existence. It has a desolation of its own, quite different from anything I have ever seen before. Our road was cut in the edge, now swooping down to the blue water, now climbing high up upon the barren sides. It was a long ride to Fiume, longer than we had thought; the road was good though a trifle narrow, and free of watercourses.

Nearing Fiume we leave the arid coast and enter a richer region, where the hills are covered with vines and beautiful Southern vegetation. We now have a series of high headlands, over which the road climbs, descending steeply again to the water's edge, and en-

circling a bay climbs over the further promontory. Each time we topped a summit we expected to sight Fiume. A back tyre exploded with a huge bang as we were passing some horses, and we were the subject of much wonder to a select group of fisher-folk while a new cover was being fitted. Even then Fate aimed a last unkind kick at us. We were bounding up the final hill before Fiume when the near front tyre exploded. The sun was setting far out on the horizon, and by the time we had replaced the burst cover darkness fell. We finished the journey by the aid of the head-lights and shortly after reached the outskirts of Fiume, welcoming the hotel with many expressions of joy. Mercédès was taken to a regular garage, and the sight of other cars was enough to tell us that our real journey had ended and that we were once more back in civilisation.

EPILOGUE

CLOSE by Fiume, along the beautiful bay, nestles Abazzia, its white villas reflecting the sunlight and twinkling like diamonds amidst the rich green of the hills behind. Half a mile from Fiume and one is upon Austrian soil ; the situation is delightful, and it is little wonder that Abazzia is Austria's most fashionable watering-place.

Thither we moved two days after our arrival at Fiume, and it is here that I have decided to draw to a conclusion our tour—for we have crossed the threshold of the Land of Promise. Trieste is only some thirty miles distant, and Trieste we already knew. Thence to Udine and Venice, Bologna, Parma, across the rolling hills to Genoa—familiar roads indeed ! As we had determined to winter on the Riviera we could now take things easy, and that is why I end the tour at beautiful Abazzia.

Ken gave a dinner that evening in honour of the successful termination of our journey, and afterwards we sat upon the open terrace beneath the dark palms watching the moonlight playing upon the velvet water leaping from ripple to ripple in joyous freedom. The evening was perfect, yet our eyes were sightless as they gazed upon the still scene—the perfumed air, the deep colour of the coast-line, the myriads of twinkling stars, the delicate crescent of silver found no answering echo in our hearts. A deep feeling of sadness hung over us ; try as we would we could not forget that our wanderings were, for the time being, over. Our bodies might be

ensconced in easy basket chairs, but our minds were elsewhere. Sheila sat with her chin resting in the palm of her left hand, her firm grey eyes reflecting the thoughts that were passing through her mind. Dorothy lay back in her chair, her eyes half closed. Ken and I smoked meditatively.

For some time we remained motionless, each busy with his or her own thoughts. It was Dorothy who finally broke the silence. Rousing herself as though from a dream, she turned to Ken and laying a hand upon his arm asked : " Of all the scenes we passed through, which are you thinking of now ? "

" The one that comes most vividly to my mind," he answered readily, " is that night drive back to Podgorica, along the Albanian frontier."

" I can almost fancy I hear the thunder now," Dorothy continued as Ken paused, " and see the bright edge of the road and the intense blackness beyond. How clear it all is in my mind, the wild-dressed folk springing into existence only to vanish the next moment."

" I think of the sunshine upon that market at Podgorica," I said. " The intense brilliancy and life of the whole scene : then of the wonderful road from Rjeka up to Cetinje——"

" And that sunset upon the Albanian Alps," Sheila interposed, " the blood-red summits and their bases of steel : Montenegro, of all lands, most dear to my heart."

" Do you remember our dash for the Serbian frontier ? " Ken was again speaking ; " that awful climb over the Semeć—the Cave of Starina Novac and the witch's hut upon the summit."

" Or Sarájevo, that afternoon of the Serbish fête," Sheila ejaculated. " Or Bosnia, with its silent forests and strange folk ; or Jajce, Banjaluka, Višĕgrad ? "

" Herzegovina, too," I added ; " the stricken Karst, with its secret rivers and hidden torrents ; Mostar and

the classic old bridge, Ali Pasha, Stepanograd towering above the Buna. The Dalmatian Riviera, with its thousand isles—Ragusa, Spalato, Trau—that wild ride over the fever swamps of Metković—Salona and the old Castle of Clissa.

"What a life has been ours!" Sheila murmured, half to herself; "day after day bringing its treasures to lay at our feet; free as the air we breathe, uncurbed, unrestrained. Leaving the old humdrum world and wandering through a land of enchantment. It scarcely seems possible that those people still live their own lives, each little band bound together by common custom and laws; the Moslem framed in his tiny shop; the white-robed *rayahs* of Bosnia working in their fields; the turbaned millers in their crazy little mills; the clean-limbed Montenegrans promenading in the bright sunshine, and their fierce-eyed enemies just over the border. Does the *muezzin* still call the Faithful to prayer? I wonder—are the lights still twinkling upon the slender minarets?—and all so near, so very, very near."

"That's the most wonderful part of all," Ken went on as Sheila's voice lost itself in the stillness of the night; "so near and yet—almost unknown. How soon will hurrying Europe wake up to the knowledge? In a few years tourists will pour over the land; the wave will roll inland until it breaks against the Albanian hills. Will it spoil these lands? Will the pure Eastern life dissolve in the great wave of Western civilisation? Time alone will show."

"But come it must," Sheila finished dreamily, "and none may fight against Fate. I almost believe the Moslem is right when he bows the head and murmurs, '*Allah achbar*, It is the will of God, *Allah-hu*——'"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I SHOULD like to express my indebtedness to the many talented authors who have written of and loved these lands so well.

Relating to Bosnia and the Herzegovina, I have drawn principally upon Mr. Evans and Herr Ashboth for my facts, and have to thank them for their valuable aid. Mr. Evans and his brother travelled through Herzegovina while the insurrection of 1876 was in progress, and their volume is intensely interesting, giving as it does a perfect description of the country immediately before Christian occupation. Herr Ashboth travelled for three years under the wing of the Austrian Government, and gives, in his book, published in London in 1890, a masterly account of the progress made. I have quoted from *The Late Uprising in Herzegovina*, by Mr. Stillman, a special correspondent who was personally involved in the insurrection of 1876, as was M. Yriarte, from whose book I have also quoted.

I have had recourse to the works of Mr. William Millar, 1897, Mr. Munro, 1895, Mr. A. A. Paton, 1849, and to that imposing volume by M. Guillaume Capus, published in Paris, 1896, and still later to *The Outgoing Turk*, by Mr. Thomson, all of which give very concise and interesting accounts of these gentlemen's impressions through the Western Balkans.

I have also to express my appreciation of the work on Dalmatian architecture, by Mr. T. G. Jackson, R.A.,

and of *Dalmatia and Montenegro*, by Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, 1848, upon whom I have relied for much of my historical information.

Furthermore, I should like to mention the pleasure I have had in reading *Dalmatia*, by Mrs. Holbach, and *The Land of the Black Mountain*, by Messrs. R. Wyon and G. Prance, while travelling through the lands they so graphically describe.

I must, moreover, mention the Rev. Denton's *Historical Survey of Montenegro*, 1877, and the Rev. Wingfield's account of Dalmatia, 1849. Whenever I have had occasion to quote the Koran I have made use of Sale's translation.

I have mentioned only those whose works bear directly upon the Western Balkans. There are, of course, many other authorities, embracing a much larger area, that deal indirectly with the subject, and to these I have had profitable recourse, and now take this opportunity of expressing my thanks.

TO THE INTENDING TOURIST THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

THEY CANNOT BE OF MUCH INTEREST TO THE ORDINARY READER, AND FOR THAT REASON ALONE I HAVE RELEGATED THEM TO THE END OF THE BOOK, WHERE ONLY INTENDING TRAVELLERS TO THE LAND OF PROMISE WILL SEARCH THEM OUT FROM OBSCURITY AND, I SINCERELY HOPE, FIND THEMSELVES SUFFICIENTLY REWARDED FOR THEIR TROUBLE.

AUSTRIA welcomes the moneyed stranger like a prodigal son. Special inducements are offered, and the Government does all in its power to ease the tourist's lot and make him feel more like a guest (though perhaps a paying one) than he will in other lands. There is an effective, if snail-like, train service and a better steamer traffic along the coast. Of course, to the traveller who desires to "do" these lands thoroughly, time is of the utmost importance, though a month or even less would be sufficient to obtain a general impression. Trieste is only thirty hours from London. By taking the steamer from there one may sail along the beautiful coast, touching at Zara, Spalato, Arbe, Curzola, Ragusa, Cattaro, and drive into Montenegro as far as Cetinje. From Ragusa take train to Mostar, Sarájevo, Jajce, Banjaluka, Agram, returning home via Vienna.

As to language, German is spoken officially almost everywhere, Italian principally upon the coast. We knew

not a single word of Serbish, yet were able to journey far from the beaten track right into the interior.

The ordinary traveller may step straight from the railway carriage into the midst of pure native life. The Government's new motor-service from Jajce to Banjaluka through the gorges of the Vrbas offers a great attraction, while the wonderful railway to the Serbian frontier from Sarájevo must on no account be missed.

The best months for Bosnia, the Herzegovina, and Montenegro are August and September; while for Dalmatia, April and May are very beautiful, as also are September, October and November. The climate is perfect, especially upon the coast. I do not know a more ideal place to winter than Ragusa. Of course, one is confined to the South Coast, for upon the highlands snow lies deep, and storms of the greatest violence are very frequent.

Hotels are, comparatively speaking, remarkably good; the cuisine is rather too Austrian to suit the stranger, and meals are served *à la carte*. Of the hotels at Banjaluka, Jajce, Sarájevo, Mostar, Spalato, and Zara, the Europa at Sarájevo is decidedly the best. The three Government hotels at Ilidže are larger and more pretentious than comfortable, and rely upon their natural attractiveness rather than upon good management. I speak as we found them: a return visit may prove these defects remedied.

The Hotel Imperial at Ragusa is quite a different class; it is the style of hotel that one would naturally expect to find, possessing as it does every modern comfort.

One must exercise great care with reference to photography. It must be remembered that Austria has had a difficult part to play in the "civilisation" of these provinces, and naturally, now that the initial difficulties have been overcome, she keeps a watchful eye upon her new possessions and regards every stranger possessing a camera as a deadly enemy, unless care is taken to ease

her mind upon this point. North of Sarájevo, in Bosnia, there are few important fortifications, and no precautions are necessary ; but round about Sarájevo, Mostar, and indeed the whole South, every summit bears an ugly modern fort. Especially in the neighbourhood of the Bocche di Cattaro, the regulations with reference to the carrying of a camera are so stringent that arrest would follow even the possession of an innocent little kodak. " A stitch in time——" is all that is needed. One has only to go to the Fortress Commandant, present a card and show one's passport, and a signed permit will be at once issued. This gives permission to photograph for a certain number of days (the length of stay usually), but one is cautioned not to " snap " any fort or military building, but to confine oneself to local views. At the end of the stay the " permit " should be returned with a polite note of thanks.

Permission is not required in Dalmatia, north of Ragusa, but no amount of persuasion will induce the authorities to allow a camera anywhere within the vicinity of the Bocche.

In Montenegro photography used to be permitted, but last year strict orders were issued to detain every camera at the frontier. Among the special facilities that the Montenegran Government accorded us, was a full permit to photograph where and what we would. Upon our return to Ragusa, I had two offers from different sources to buy my whole set of views taken in the Land of the Black Mountain, which, needless to say, I refused.

As the Dual Empire is composed of many minor countries, so her postal service provides an equally bewildering choice of stamps. It is typical to a certain extent of the bitter feeling that exists in the heart of her peoples that each is jealous of the other, and wants to possess an independent issue. Though Austrian and Hungarian territory are, to the stranger's eye, one and the same, much as England and Scotland are, they are in

reality as separate from each other as pride of race can make them.

The traveller, for instance, may pass through a portion of Hungary without realising the fact until he comes to post a letter. He may for weeks have been using the large stamps of Austria bearing the aged Emperor's head upon them, and unwittingly stick one upon his letter posted at Fiume or Agram. It is doubtful if the unlucky epistle would ever again be heard of. Upon the other hand, did the tourist stamp his letter with the " carrier-pigeon " of Hungary, and neglect to post it till he has crossed an imperceptible frontier line, his letter would in all probability vanish for good and all from the light of day.

Dalmatia uses Austrian stamps, Hungary and Croatia have a special issue of their own, while for Bosnia and Herzegovina the Government have designed a really artistic set of oblong stamps, each bearing a miniature photograph of some local scene. Like Joseph's coat, they are of many colours, and form quite an advertisement which, in Austrian eyes, is their chief value. Thus, not only care is needed in selecting the right stamp to use, but one must perforce carry quite a large stock of varieties in order to avoid being stranded.

The incessant change of scenery and peoples that these lands offer is perhaps their greatest charm, and it would be hard indeed to exaggerate the pleasure and novelty that a tour through their midst will give to the ordinary traveller.

To the motorist the attractions are tenfold, and a few hints gained from practical experience will undoubtedly prove of service. The very novelty of actually guiding one's car through the intricate maze of a Moslem bazaar, of halting beside some graceful mosque, to be surrounded in a moment by a swarm of medieval figures, is in itself entrancing. Even the air we breathe, laden with that

peculiar perfume of steaming coffee, spices and tanned leather that clings to every Eastern bazaar, lends a final touch of intoxication to the scene, and one is half inclined to pinch oneself in order to make sure that it is not after all only a wonderful dream.

The automobilist should have, if possible, unlimited time ; that is, if he wishes thoroughly to explore the lands and to gain a true insight into the lives of their people. He can, of course, as the Americans say, " hustle," but he will lose much more than he can possibly gain. My wife and I once travelled from Ragusa to Boulogne in fourteen days, a distance of just over two thousand miles, crossing the Alps and Switzerland in October. I most certainly do not recommend this style of travelling, especially through the Balkans, as the majority of the four- (and sometimes two-) footed animals strongly resent the " hustling " process, for Moslem and Christian alike agree in regarding silent meditation as more blessed than hurry.

Besides, we have grown very fond of these lands, and would not have them know the " road-hog." I fancy, too, that reprisals would follow in deadly earnest ; for one is dealing with a race of people who have little fear of death and who are kept in constant friction by religious feuds among themselves. I do not recommend any motorist to take his car there for the mere sake of automobiling, or with any idea of enjoying long stretches of speed. The road traveller must be more than motorist, he must be a lover of the old-world charm and novelty of his surroundings ; his sympathies for the frightened and terrified drivers with their cattle must overcome his own personal annoyance : in a word, he must be willing to enter into the new conditions that this life entails.

There are many ways of touring these lands ; my advice is to commence with Bosnia, and end in the north of Dalmatia (as described). It depends to a certain

extent from which direction the motorist approaches the Land of Promise. I will give the different itineraries as I have travelled them.

1. *From Vienna.* (I need not map out the route as far as the Gay Capital.) South over the Semmering to Gratz and MARBURG.

2. *From Tirol.*

(*a*) Join the Pusterthal (valley) either from Innsbruck, Bozen, Cortina, or Salzburg, thence via Villach and Klagenfurt to MARBURG.

(*b*) From Villach take the highway to Udine (Italy), and before reaching Pontebba turn sharp to the left to Laibach, and so to AGRAM.

(*c*) From Villach direct to Laibach.

(The last two roads are very similar as far as Laibach, and both rather bad ; the horses are particularly restive, but no worse than in Croatia.)

3. *From Italy.*

(*a*) Verona or Padua to Udine, and thence to Pontebba and Laibach.

(*b*) Direct to Trieste and Fiume. (One should take this road when returning.)

For the benefit of those motorists who do not know the Alps particularly well, I will give a brief list of the most enjoyable routes to reach the above starting-places.

BOULOGNE.

A. Via Paris . . . . } Besançon { Interlaken.
B. (Avoiding Paris) Amiens, St. Quentin, Verdun, Nancy . . } Besançon { Geneva.

INTERLAKEN.

A. BRÜNIG PASS—Lucerne—Altdorf—GOTTHARD PASS . . . . . } { Locarno, Palanza.
B. Rhone Valley—Aigle—Brigue—SIMPLON PASS . } { Lugano—Como—MILAN.
C. Zug—Vorlberg—ALBERG PASS . { Landeck—Innsbruck. Meran—Bozen.

MILAN.

A. Como—Val Tellina—Sondrio—STELVIO PASS { Landeck— Innsbruck— Meran— Bozen.

B. Como — Sondrio — APRICA PASS — TONALE PASS—MENDEL PASS . . . } Bozen.

C. Bergamo—Brescia—Riva—Trieste . . }

D. Brescia—Verona—Padua (Venice) . . Udine.

INNSBRUCK. BOZEN.

A. Franzenfeste . . .

B. Predazzo { PORDOI & FALZAREGO PASSES / CORTINA ROLLE PASS—Cortina } Toblack / Belluno. } Marburg / Udine.

C. Verona . . . .

When we have been too late for the Alps we have returned to England via Udine, Bologna, Parma, Genoa and the Riviera.

There are many roads that may be preferred to these, North Europe, for instance, via Metz, Col de la Schlucht, Col du Bussang, etc., and thence through Germany. Or south of Switzerland, over the Col du Mont Cenis, Petit St. Bernard, etc. Space does not permit of my enumerating as many as I would wish. Tirol is very rapidly ousting Switzerland as a favourite playground for motorists. Austria keeps her mountain roads in magnificent order, while Switzerland, upon the other hand, is allowing hers rapidly to degenerate. Last summer the road over the Simplon from the summit to Iselle was a disgrace, and this is but one of many instances. In Switzerland, again, absurd rules are in force, restricting autos, and the penalties are often quite out of proportion to the offence. Upon the other hand, Tirol offers many inducements, good hotels, and exquisite scenery. But to return to the subject in hand.

Roads are, as can easily be understood, extremely variable, and must not be judged by the ordinary European standard. The automobilist must be ready and eager to rough things, just as his car must be capable of grinding over heavy surfaces — fording a river if

needs be, able to climb astounding gradients and, most important of all, absolutely reliable from breakdown. This latter quality is more important than it sounds. For instance, had Mercédès collapsed upon that journey to the Serbian-Turkish frontier, we should have found ourselves in a pretty tight corner.

However, the beaten track via Banjaluka, Jajce, Sarájevo, Mostar, Ragusa is comparatively easy, and petrol can now be obtained in each of these towns. There are no garages whatever; the car must be left outside, often in the street or, if lucky, in some garden. Dealers' ideas upon the relation that quantity and weight bear to each other in respect to petrol and oil are rather hazy. Petrol or benzine is usually sold by weight, and in four-gallon tins; four gallons are twenty litres, which should weigh 14 kilos. Sometimes, as at Cetinje, we were compelled to buy as much as twenty gallons (sixty kilos) in one huge bottle. Benzine varies from three kronen to seven kronen a gallon. Oil (weighing one kilo per litre is five kilos to a gallon) costs anything up to nine shillings a gallon. In Montenegro we had to carry enough benzine for 340 miles, returning to Cetinje for a fresh supply. Tyres can be purchased at Sarájevo and Ragusa, up to 925 by 125; larger sizes are easily obtainable in a few days from Vienna.

Maps are rather a trouble. We carried a good sketch map and a set of the Austrian Military Survey Maps, upon which we traced our road in red ink. (Doubtless some enterprising firm will soon publish better maps when there is a greater demand.)

I do not advise motorists to attempt the road east of Sarájevo towards the Serbian-Turkish frontiers. The details of our journey will, I feel sure, prove this, although those who care for a sporting three days will have their wish gratified, and it is safe to say will never experience a quiet moment during the whole time.

Montenegro is another *Experience*, and once the difficulty of the Bocche is overcome the traveller will enjoy such delights that he hardly dreamed existed, and, if I may use the expression, will meet a foeman worthy of his steel, for unless one has had personal experience it is difficult to conceive the intense strain that a tour in the Black Mountain entails.

From Jajce to Mostar there is a road that avoids Sarájevo. This is in itself well worthy of doing ; it does not come into the present book, as I wished to illustrate the celebrated capital, but it may easily be made. It leaves the Travnik road at Vakuf-dl, and joins the Mostar road at the commencement of the Narenta defile, crossing a noble range of mountains ; the road is a revelation, being magnificently engineered and reaching a high altitude.

Taught by experience, we carried plenty of provisions, and with a quick water-boiling appliance could make Bovril, soup, cocoa, coffee and tea ; we had supplies of potted meats and jams, bread and butter and boiled ham, besides many tins of biscuits. During the intensely hot days we lived almost entirely upon fruit, luscious Zuccar melons, grapes, peaches and green figs. We made a point of having lunch and tea upon the road, so that each day was a picnic in itself.

I am not going to insult the motorist by sketching out for him his repair kit, or the tools he should carry ; the motorist who proposes an Eastern tour such as this would resent my inference of his ignorance. Suffice it to say that he must carry a spare for every vital part that may go wrong, and be capable of repairing any other damage, quickly and well.

Excellent as must be the machine, there is yet a still more important factor to consider—himself. I am speaking now as a driver, and so can write from personal experience. Nowhere else in Europe, not even in Sweden or Norway, will the motorist's patience be more sorely

tried. He must be constantly ready to stop the engine, dismount and help horses, mules, donkeys, and divers other cattle past ; not once, but times without number—perhaps after ten hours of continual alarms ; after extracting terrified folk from ditches, or from under overturned carts ; after having fitted three new covers beneath a sun that has blistered the paintwork and melted the rubber bulbs of the horns ; after having taken a wrong road more than once, forded a river, and crossed a ploughed field, he must never for an instant become impatient, but retain his good-humour ; willing to leap out and assist the continuous stream of stupid drivers he will meet ; he must exercise great care in avoiding children, who invariably run in front of his car ; he must ever be on the *qui vive* for gutters and dangerous pieces of road, ready to face unquestionable bridges, and to bear with patience the suffocating dust that makes his throat feel like a blotting-pad and his eyes ache. Maybe, all this time he is driving along a precipice-edged road (as in Montenegro), rounding innumerable sharp turns, with his nerves continually strained to the utmost tension, in anticipation of some incident that will require all his coolness and resource. Yet again, I say, he must not, either through sheer weariness or irritability, lose his temper, for his mind should be absolutely free to deal with any critical situation that may suddenly require an instantaneous and definite choice of action. A wrong decision, an error of judgment would, in all probability, prove fatal.

I am speaking seriously, for touring under these conditions is not all poetical motion and tranquil enjoyment. I have known occasions when, for seconds together, it has been a question of life or death. There is no need to exaggerate, and few motorists have experienced what we have, therefore it would be manifestly unfair if I did not show the " other " side of such touring. Once or twice,

when I have had the wheel from sunrise till sunset, I have been so physically and mentally weary that it has required all my strength of will to keep myself thoroughly wide awake. I feel how absurd this must sound to the ordinary tourist, but I am only stating actual facts, and I can with an easy conscience say that I have experienced more bad (and good) moments *en auto* than during any other portion of my existence. There is always a certain anxiety when ladies are of the party, for naturally they add a heavier responsibility than one would otherwise feel.

In conclusion, I will say that the joys of such touring, once tasted, are never to be surpassed. Not only does it give a feeling of complete independence, but at the same time a strong sense of personal fitness : it brings out what is best in one, and shows up any little weakness that may have lurked unsuspected. Moreover, it is a splendid discipline ; each day you become harder, your nerves steadier, your decision more instantaneous and decisive ; in a word, you quickly find your own legs, and carry yourself with a knowledge that it is upon your quickness, foresight and endurance alone that your party are dependent. As the weeks pass into months, you grow so accustomed to the life that the end of the tour is reached before you quite realise it, and you feel that a link has snapped which bound you to many of the most enjoyable days of your existence. The return to modern civilisation is both irksome and unreal. Like the captive beast, you scent the air of freedom from afar, and your hearts will be ever filled with an intense longing to return to that unbounded horizon, when your eyes were confined only by the distant peaks, and where Nature took you into her confidence, teaching you the first true lesson of her great secret by the knowledge of your own impotence.

From	To	Distance	Hotels	Page	Remarks
Marburg .	Agram . .	*a.* 90 *b.* 85	Imperial. Good, modern garage.	1–10	Two Itineraries. *a.* Good as far as *Cille*, thence very narrow and bad. Not to be recommended. *b.* Rather narrow as far as *Warasdin*, thence good. (If necessary, one may stay at Warasdin, Hotel Wilde Mann, remarkably comfortable.) Preferable.
Agram . .	Kostajnica .	70	One and only. Clean and good for size of place. Room for car in open yard.	10–15	The strangest part about this road is that it seems to be in a constant state of decay—I refer to bridges. The first time we traversed it we experienced three hair-raising incidents, two of which all but proved fatal. Upon a second journey, making Banjaluka-Agram in the day, we found a large bridge washed away, and had to ford a dangerous crossing. There is a road branching off the main road at Sissek, but this possesses so vile a surface as to make a greater speed than six miles an hour impossible. Better to stick to main road.
Kostajnica .	Banjaluka. .	*a.* 63 *b.* 75	Hotel Bosna. Large and good. Garage for two cars.	24–29	Two Itineraries. *a. Via Prjedor.* Turn sharp to right after crossing bridge and entering Bosnia; road good, though very hilly and a trifle narrow. *b. Via Gradiska.* Turn to left after bridge; better road than *a*, passes through two Tirolean settlements.

Banjaluka .	Jajce . .	46	Grand Hotel. Government house good; fine position. No shelter; car must remain in open street.	38–54	Road passes through Gorges of the Vrbas. Scenery magnificent. Since Government bus service horses quite quiet, and benzine easily obtainable.
Jajce . . .	Sarájevo . .	107	Hotel Europa. Best house in Bosnia. No shelter for car. Government's three hotels at Ilidže, larger, but not so comfortable. Excellent lock-up coach-house.	75–81	Via Travnik. Follows the Vrbas to Vakuf-dl (road continues over high mountains to Mostar); to Sarájevo turn sharp to left; hilly but good.
Sarájevo to the Serbian and Turkish frontiers via Rogatica and Višegrad		300	Hotel at Višegrad good, considering size and position of town. Car in street.	113–151	Should only be attempted as an experience; occupies three days.
Sarájevo . .	Mostar . .	85	Hotel upon the Narenta, quite good. Shelter for car.	152–165	Road crosses the Ivan Pass and enters the Narenta defile—good; scenery magnificent, in places finest in Europe.
Mostar . .	Ragusa . .	*a.* 135 *b.* 110	Hotel Imperial. Thoroughly up-to-date; excellent in every way. No garage; car stands in private entrance; open.	177–203	Two Itineraries. *a. Via Gacko and Bilek.* Magnificent road crossing the great Karst Desert, and touching the Alps of Montenegro. *b. Via Stolac.* Good as far as Lubinje, very narrow to Trebinje, on the whole excellent; can be taken for sake of variation.

From	To	Distance	Hotels	Page	Remarks
Ragusa . .	Cetinje (Montenegro)	80	Grand Hotel. Small, but well managed; cuisine excellent and attention good. No shelter; car in open yard.	219–249	Remarkable journey; good road to the Bocche di Cattaro; car must be shipped across the Caterne; wonderful climb into the Land of the Black Mountain.
Cetinje . .	Nikšić . .	75	Hotel Americano. Small, but quite good in its way. Car in open garden.	267–279	Road good; long descent to Rjeka, thence heading into the interior. Scenery magnificent; needs careful driving and constant watchfulness.
Nikšić . . .	Podgorica .	35	Hotel remarkable. Good and clean. Government garage.	287–292	Returns part of previous journey. Podgorica intensely interesting; within touch of the Albanian frontier.
Podgorica-Kolašin and return .		90	..	300–319	Not to be recommended, though road should by now be quite hard. (See description.)
Podgorica .	Cetinje . .	30	..	320–325	Same road as Cetinje-Nikšić.
Cetinje . .	Antivari . .	50	Hotel very good; built and run for the Italian employees of the railway. No shelter for car.	327–336	Descend to Rjeka. Thence over excellent new road to Vir Pazar (boat leaves here for Skutari every day, any time between one and four p.m.), thence road crosses Sutormann Pass and descends to the Adriatic; good.

Return to Cetinje and Ragusa.					
Ragusa . .	Metković . .	50	Only one. Good in case of emergency. No shelter for car.	372–376	Road follows the beautiful coast, but is bad and stony. Tourists should not stay at Metković (fever). Better to start early and make Spalato.
Metković . .	Spalato . .	112	Hotel Troccoli. Quite good. No garage.	377–383	Two Itineraries. *a.* Via Imoski. Road fair but extremely hilly. *b.* Other road near the coast; hilly but good. Preferable. — Descends the valley of the Cettina; fine scenery.
From Ragusa is another and better road to Spalato, *via Stolac*. Road much improved; passes through Imoski, 150 miles					
Spalato . .	Zara . .	*a.* 100 *b.* 135	Grand Hotel. Good on the whole. No garage.	401–411	Two Itineraries. *a.* In touch with the coast, via Sebenico, ferry to be crossed. *b.* Much longer, but road finest in all Dalmatia, via Knin. Made the distance in just six hours.
Zara . . .	Fiume . .	*a.* 180 *b.* 220	Europa. Excellent; back in civilisation. Public garage.	419–443	*a.* Via Obrovazzo, Gospić and Zengg. Crosses Valabit Alps entering Croatia. Very bad in places, but quite safe. Animals particularly wild; great care needed. *b.* One may branch off at Gospić in order to visit the Plitvica Lakes (good hotel).

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